RUSSIA'S INTRIGUING COURT—STEPHEN KOTKIN
ALGERIA'S SURPRISING SURVIVAL—ROGER KAPLAN
AMERICA'S ABORTION HABIT—CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

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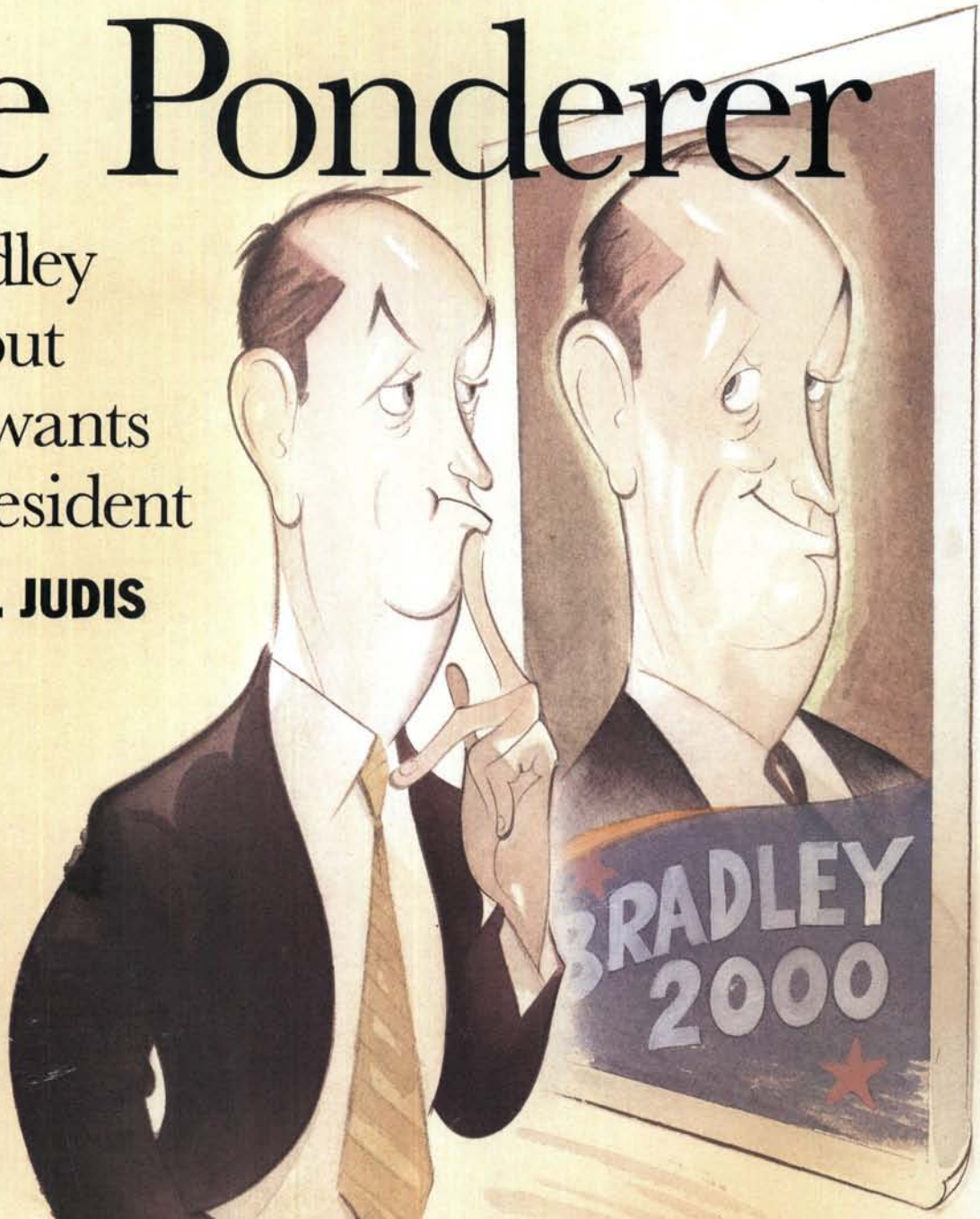
THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Ponderer

Bill Bradley figures out why he wants to be president

BY JOHN B. JUDIS



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75 years old.

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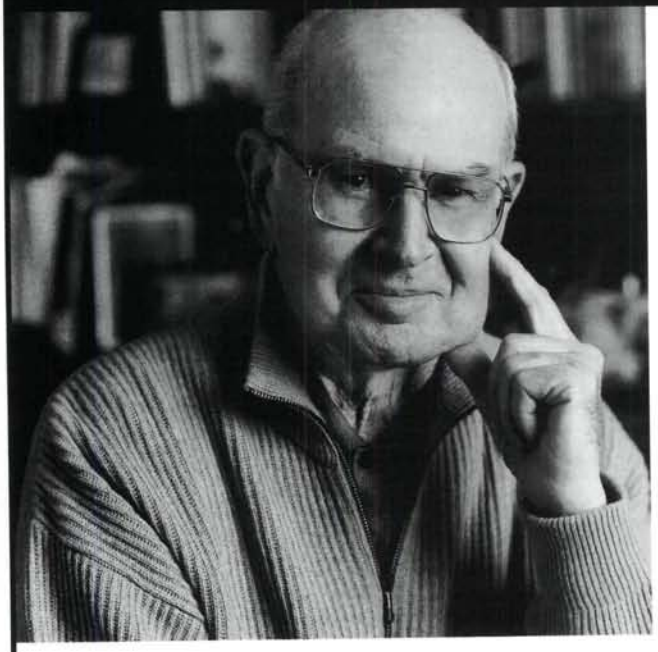

"My son gave me a computer three years ago. I do everything on it—stay in touch with friends all over the world, manage my investments... I'm even tracing my genealogy. I'm in a seniors computer group, and we just shipped 110 computers to North Africa, to set up a bulletin board for hospitals there. We're always doing something..."

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

APRIL 5, 1999

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WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,394

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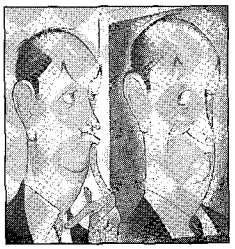

Cover by Jonathan Houston for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Illustration by Eric Palma. Article on page 22.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** Human cloning, corporate liability, &c.

8 **CHARLES LANE** TRB: SORRY ABOUT THAT Bill Clinton, cold war apologist.

11 **THE EDITORS** TRICKS OF TRADE Why the United States is right to fight for free trade in bananas. NOTEBOOK North Korea's nukes, Clinton's fudge, &c.

13 **JOHN MERONEY** HOLLYWOOD DISPATCH: OSCAR WINNER Almost five decades after Elia Kazan named names to the House Un-American Activities Committee, the film industry recognizes him for his cinematic work.

14 **CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL** PRO-LIFESTYLE Anti-abortion crusaders believe they can still win over the two-thirds of Americans who say they have moral qualms about abortion. But Americans are less conflicted than they appear.

16 **STEPHEN KOTKIN** A TSAR IS BORN Could a flashy Russian filmmaker be Russia's next president? Sure—if Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov wants it that way.

19 **ROGER KAPLAN** CALM THE CASBAH Why Algeria's government may have finally won its horrific internal war with Islamist terrorists.

22 **JOHN B. JUDIS** JOURNEY MAN Bill Bradley hits the campaign trail in search of a reason to run for president.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: HIGH SCHOOL, LOW LIVES *Cruel Intentions* is sad proof of teenagers' grip on Hollywood; *Analyze This* can't make much of its funny premise; *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* is a high-spirited gangster comedy.

29 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: THE ARTIFACT MUSEUM Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams on Broadway—again.

32 **ADAM ZAGAJEWSKI** THE SHABBY AND THE SUBLIME Is literary greatness still possible?

38 **RANDALL KENNEDY** "MR. CIVIL RIGHTS" *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* by Juan Williams

40 **JAMES TATE** POEM *My Private Tasmania*

43 **ISAAC KRAMNICK** HAIRDRESSERS AND DEMOCRACY *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* by Don Herzog

46 **SAM TANENHAUS** NEW YORK DIARIST: MISREADINGS

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 220, Number 14, Issue 4,394, April 5, 1999. (Printed in the U.S. on March 17, 1999.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, April 26 & May 3, July 19 & 26, and Sept. 13 & 20) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Ann Rossaki at (202) 331-7494 or Marti Meyerson Hooper in our NY sales office at (212) 925-5790. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $4.00 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax 202-331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: send change of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope (Internet mail address: submissions@tnr.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Gene genie

To the editors:
Gregg Easterbrook ("Medical Evolution," March 1) shows more foresight when he writes "the knowledge of cloning is unstoppable, in the sense that no force has ever incarcerated knowledge," than when he declares that we need to "sort out [the] rights and wrongs [of biotechnology] before sheer technological momentum imposes an outcome on us."

One of the dangers of the new genetic technologies is precisely that moral concerns may be overwhelmed by the rush for new and more powerful therapies. The availability of techniques for genetic enhancement may prove so irresistible that efforts to regulate them on ethical or social grounds may be impractical. Is it really feasible, for example, to say "yes" to a parent's wish to enhance his child's prospects by endowing the child with genes for, say, tallness and athleticism, and "no" to an individual who wishes to clone herself to satisfy her vanity? Talk of "sorting out" our views on genetic technology—as though it were possible to arrive at a broad social consensus on what should be permissible and what should not—is probably naïve.

ROBERT LEVY
Somerville, Massachusetts

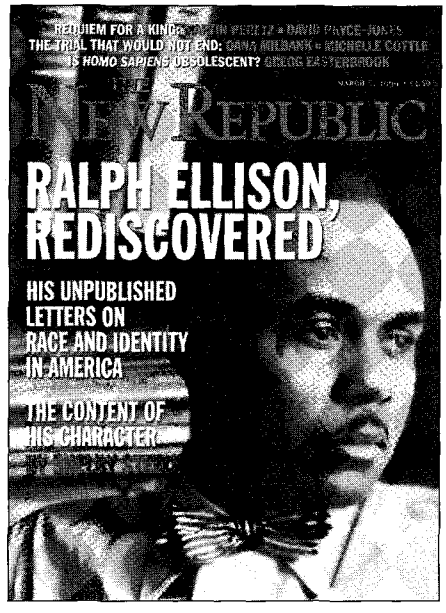
To the editors:
People of goodwill may well continue to differ on when life begins, but surely those of us who believe that the moment of conception is the moment of truth are at least entitled to a faithful description of our position. Instead, Gregg Easterbrook asserts that such a position must translate into a belief that "a single cell can have sacred rights." Having built this straw man, Easterbrook then leaves the demolition to National Institutes of Health director Harold Varmus, who is quoted as saying: "If we say any cell has the potential to be a human being, then every time you cut your finger, do you have to wear black?"

But no cell on my body will ever become a human being—I therefore cheerfully shave, give blood, receive haircuts, and just generally dispense with cells all the time.

Surely we can agree on this much: A clear distinction can be made between cells that *might* grow into a human life and those that we know will not. The cells in the former category demand that we tread with the utmost humility and respect. To Easterbrook, these bundles might be merely "a handful of cells." But, of course, that is precisely what he himself was once: a handful of cells. And the fact that, as Easterbrook relates, these handfuls often "die during the normal process of conception" can in no way sanction the *intentional* cessation of their development.

JOHN GASAWAY
Kansas City, Missouri

To the editors:
Gregg Easterbrook writes: "Every new life has an interest in being born, which ... may someday be the clincher argument for cloning." This seems to me like the clincher argument for never


REQUIEM FOR A KING?
THE TRIAL THAT WOULD NOT END:
IS HOMO SAPIENS OBSOLESCENT?
THE NEW REPUBLIC
RALPH ELLISON, REDISCOVERED
HIS UNPUBLISHED LETTERS ON RACE AND IDENTITY IN AMERICA
THE CONTENT OF HIS CHARACTER

beginning (human) cloning. Once cloned individuals are created, so is a cloned individuals' lobby, which will argue that public statements against cloning harm the "self-esteem" of cloned individuals and that any attempt to ban further cloning would amount to "genocide." The cloning genie will be very hard to put back into the bottle.

PAUL F. PINSKY
Silver Spring, Maryland

Gun control

To the editors:
Your opposition to the lawsuits brought by New Orleans and other cities against the gun industry is based on a misunderstanding of basic principles of American tort law ("An Uncivil Action," March 1).

You confidently assert that a "key tenet" of American product-liability law is that manufacturers should be held liable only for "harm stemming from the *proper* use of their product." I guess this means that automobile manufacturers could never have been held liable for failing to install such safety improvements as seat belts and air bags because most auto accidents are caused by some manner of driver error. As the Supreme Court of Ohio put it recently in holding that the maker of a disposable lighter may be liable for failing to use feasible means to protect against misuse of its product by children: "[A] product may be found defective in design ... where the manufacturer fails to incorporate feasible safety features to prevent harm caused by foreseeable human error." This is the basis for the New Orleans lawsuit: Because the gun industry is well aware that many gun owners make the mistake of leaving guns accessible to children, it should be liable for its failure to use feasible safety systems to prevent tragedies caused by those mistakes.

All parties whose wrongful conduct contributes to gun violence should be held accountable. Your desire to exempt gun makers cannot be reconciled with the law.

DENNIS A. HENIGAN
Director, Legal Action Project
Center to Prevent Handgun Violence
Washington, D.C.

New regimes

To the editors:
Frank Smyth looks at the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and concludes with a sneer that, if there is war, there cannot be new leaders in Africa ("Battle Horn," March 1). In so doing, he is only destroying straw men of his own making. There is a group of new leaders in Africa, and Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea and Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia are among them. But they are new leaders, not new saints. They are politicians trying to build strong states on a tough continent where the postcolonial order has collapsed. They are not idealists seeking to build a new world of democracy, and they never have claimed to be. It was the Clinton administration's Africa team, and commentators like Frank Smyth, who misrepresented them in the past.

Isaias and Melés, together with Yoweri Museveni in Uganda and Paul Kagame in Rwanda, do not play by the old rules of Africa, which imposed respect for colonial borders. But those rules, enforced for three decades by the United Nations, the United States, and France, helped maintain the myth of the sovereignty of states that had de facto ceased to exist, as in Somalia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of

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the Congo. Outsiders are no longer willing to intervene in Africa, and states have to fend for themselves. This is the context in which wars are breaking out. Strong states will survive, weak ones will disappear, and eventually a new order will emerge. Tragic as the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea or the conflicts in Central Africa are for those involved, we should look at history and ask whether states were ever built without war or whether a new balance of power ever emerged in any region through negotiations alone. Then we can sneer, if we are still in the mood.

MARINA OTTAWAY
Washington, D.C.

Frank Smyth replies:

I plead guilty to Marina Ottaway's charge that I, along with the Clinton administration, was too optimistic about the new leaders before, but I think that she is too easy on them now. Rather than mature from guerrilla leaders into effective statesmen, they have acted more like incorrigible bullies who only know how to fight. Museveni and Kagame overextended themselves in the Congo by trying to oust Laurent Kabila after helping him seize power there, while Isaias and Meles fight a war on the Horn that cooler heads of state might have been able to avoid.

Sound investment

To the editors:

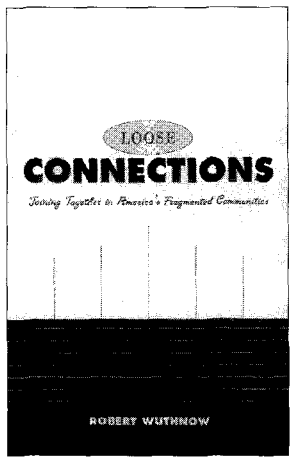
Matthew Miller ("Slick," February 15) and Jonathan Chait ("Doubletalk," February 22) look at President Clinton's proposal to save Social Security and wonder why the seeming double-counting. I look and wonder why, in the middle of the best economy of our lives, in the midst of the baby boomers' most productive years, in the face of the staggering future cost of the boomer retirement, we still can't keep our hands off the current Social Security surplus but would, in the example they cite, save (i.e., apply to the national debt) merely a percentage of it.

This is not overall debt reduction but a move to decrease the publicly held debt while increasing the internal government debt (between the U.S. Treasury and Social Security trust fund) that our children will still be expected to pay.

Only after these obligations are met should we consider if tax reductions are possible (I doubt that they are), and only after we have paid off the debt should we consider investing Social Security surpluses in the stock market.

JAMES M. KELSEY
Fort Wayne, Indiana

LOOSE CONNECTIONS
Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities
ROBERT WUTHNOW



Acknowledging that there has been a significant change in group affiliations—away from traditional civic organizations—Robert Wuthnow shows that many Americans are finding new and innovative ways to help one another through short-term task-oriented networks: some are combining occupational skills with community interests in voluntary associations, while others use communication technologies, such as the Internet, to connect with like-minded people in distant locations. These more fluid groups are better suited to dealing with today's needs than the fraternal orders and ladies' auxiliaries of the past. Wuthnow looks at the challenges that must be faced if these innovative forms of civic involvement are to flourish.
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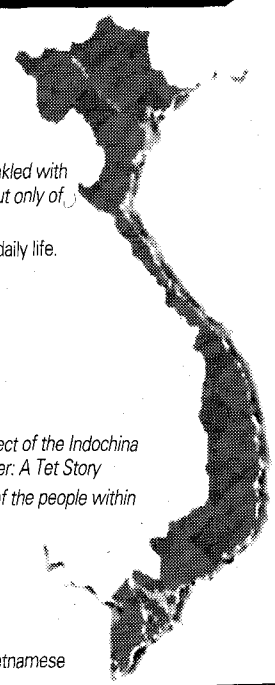

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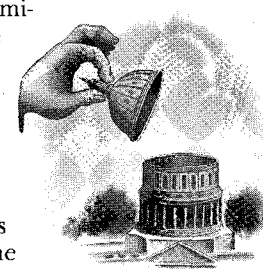
FROM WASHINGTON

Sorry about that

Back in 1992, Peruvian intelligence agents captured Abimael Guzman, the notorious leader of Peru's Shining Path terrorist army. The arrest, and Guzman's subsequent imprisonment in a dungeon on a Peruvian naval base, broke the back of Shining Path, a Khmer Rouge-like organization that had been perilously close to taking power in Lima. Now suppose that the Peruvian secret antiterrorism police had captured their man with help from the CIA—training, sophisticated listening devices, the works. And suppose that the secret CIA assistance had been ordered by the Bush administration in spite of the fact that the administration knew that the Peruvian armed forces and the government of Alberto Fujimori were riddled with corruption and guilty of human rights violations ranging from the annihilation of whole Indian villages to the harassment of journalists. As vicious as Shining Path was, there is irrefutable proof that the military and police forces the CIA would have helped to stamp it out had an ocean of blood on their hands, too.

I thought of this historical problem after President Clinton's recent speech in Guatemala, during which he apologized for American intelligence's long history of covert collaboration with that country's brutal military and police. "It is important that I state clearly that support for military forces or intelligence units that engaged in violent and widespread repression . . . was wrong," he said. "And the United States must not repeat that mistake." This follows on the heels of the president's remarks in Africa about the past "mistakes" of U.S. foreign policy in that continent. "[D]uring the cold war," he said, "when we were so concerned about being in competition with the Soviet Union, very often we dealt with countries in Africa and in other parts of the world based more on how they stood in the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union than how they stood in the struggle for their own people's aspirations to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities."

But, as the Peru example suggests, some questions need to be raised about Clinton's moral reasoning here. Obviously, it's not sufficient to evaluate only the U.S.'s actions. Those actions must be weighed against the likely consequences—including the human rights consequences—of the alternatives at the time. In the case of Peru, many people would agree that the prospect of another Cambodia in the Andes would have warranted helping an unattractive government. Guatemala is a tougher call. The Marxist guerrillas the CIA and the Guatemalan Army were fighting might or might not have ended up killing just as many people, or more, if they had come to power. Maybe they would have only set up a sloppy, semi-brutal tyranny like the one in Sandinista Nicaragua, or a steely and suffocating one like in Cuba. Would such a regime have generated even more economic and political refugees than the hundreds of thousands who streamed north in the early '80s? (Before you say no, don't forget the flight of the boat people after the fall of South Vietnam.)



In any case, it's worth noting that the worst massacres by the military took place in Guatemala precisely when the Americans were least involved. In 1977, the Carter administration offered the Guatemalans military aid conditioned on human rights improvements. The Guatemalans refused, and U.S. military aid ceased. Unencumbered, the Guatemalans pursued their scorched-earth counterinsurgency. In contrast, El Salvador's military accepted U.S. aid and the human rights strings, however tenuous, that came attached. As a result, the United States was tarred by its association with a brutal and corrupt force, and the war dragged on much longer than it would have if the Salvadorans had been free to pursue a "Guatemalan solution." In the event, some 70,000 people were killed; but the Guatemalan counterexample suggests that even more Salvadorans would have died if the United States had stayed out.

And then there is the question of the broader rights and wrongs of the cold war itself. Surely, by apologizing to Guatemala, the president does not mean to suggest that there was some overall moral equivalence between the United States and the Soviets. Or that the "competition" he dismissively alluded to in Africa was some sort of figment of our imagination. In examining the morality of our actions during the cold war, American intentions must also be taken into account. And our intent was to prevent the expansion of a system that manifestly has visited epic evil on millions of people from Berlin to Beijing. Does the president also wish to apologize for past U.S. support of the Afghan resistance fighters, who dealt their share of drugs to finance their war, and some of whom have gone on to bedevil the United States as Islamist terrorists—but who also played a critical role in bringing down the Evil Empire?

Obviously, the pursuit of our foreign policy objectives around the world requires us, occasionally, to make common cause with people who seem, at the moment, to be the lesser of two evils. You can be sure that some of this is going on today, despite the president's pledge not to repeat our "mistake." Or are the Clinton administration's wars on drugs and terrorism being waged completely without the assistance of paid informants who may themselves have been murderers or drug traffickers in some back alley of the developing world? Come to think of it, isn't one premise of Clinton's policy of "engagement" with China that human rights cannot always be the only priority of our dealings with foreign states?

The president comes from a party whose leading foreign policy lights of the '60s and '70s surveyed the conflicts in the rapidly modernizing developing world and urged America to get "on the right side of history." That is, to cease attempting to check the revolutionary movements whose triumphs were both inevitable and, in some sense, necessary. The apologies offered today seem like an attempt to vindicate this approach in retrospect, long after history has demonstrated that, in fact, these often Soviet-supported movements were anything but a reflection of the poor majority's will.

The history of the cold war, and of America's role in it, is much more complex, politically and morally, than the president's mea culpas would suggest. Factually, too. Apologies are not only empty words; they prejudge a historical record that remains largely secret. If the president really wants to do something tangible to help us understand the past, he will order the speedy declassification of the rest of America's cold war intelligence archive. It's time to lay bare the documentary details of the long, twilight struggle. There will be plenty of ugliness to consider and explain. But let's let the public decide what we as a country have to apologize for.

CHARLES LANE

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 5, 1999

TRICKS OF TRADE

Always the stuff of great sight gags, bananas also make for great puns. And so, ever since the United States announced that it was punishing Europe for its tariffs on banana imports, the headline writers have been, well, going bananas: "THE BIG BANANA SPLIT" (*Time*), "YES, WE HAVE NO BANANA WAR" (*National Journal*), and "NO MORE MR. SECOND BANANA" (*The Boston Herald*). However, this trade dispute is actually serious business. The economic future of much of Latin America and the Caribbean depends on how it is resolved, and so may the future of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The good news is that there's still time to work out an amicable settlement and that the principle for which the United States is fighting—lower trade barriers—is the right one. The bad news is that the United States does not control the moral high ground, thanks to its own lingering protectionism and the Clinton administration's unique ability to turn trade policy into an instrument of campaign fund-raising.

The banana fight has been a source of contention between the United States and Europe for many years. Although the United States does not really export bananas itself, U.S.-based multinationals do, through their operations in such countries as Honduras and Ecuador. Because of economies of scale, and their superior technology, these companies—chiefly, Chiquita and Dole—can produce better, cheaper bananas than their rivals in small Caribbean nations.

In a perfect world, where there were no tariffs or subsidies to distort the free exchange of goods and services, most of the world would buy from Chiquita and Dole. The tiny island nations, in turn, would find other crops. But, four decades ago, former European colonial powers agreed to give their former colonies preferential treatment on banana imports. The effect was to prevent the big U.S.-based multinationals, which now control 78 percent of the European banana market, from taking over the whole thing.

Eventually, the United States took its complaints to the World Trade Organization. Twice the WTO has ruled that the United States was correct and ordered the Europeans to change their policies; twice the Europeans have demurred. When the EU stalled again this month, the United States retaliated by imposing 100 percent taxes on certain luxury items produced chiefly in the countries most opposed to ending the banana subsidies: France, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

The United States is right to insist upon lower trade barriers. For years, the EU has stubbornly refused to tear down its lavish system of agricultural subsidies and tariffs—including its ban on beef from American hormone-fed cattle—which has harmed not just U.S. farmers but European consumers as well. The banana quotas are of a piece with these policies, and the fact that the EU is willing to defy the WTO to preserve them smacks of Euro-hypocrisy. If the WTO is to become the world's free-trade facilitator, countries must respect its decisions.

And yet, when the Europeans accuse the United States of similar hypocrisy, they are, alas, correct. Because, while the American market for agricultural products is considerably more open than it was a few years ago, there remain a few key crops that the United States goes out of its way to protect. Chief among these is sugar; the U.S. industry benefits from millions of dollars per year in government subsidies. Together with tariffs and quotas on imported sugar, this has raised the price of raw sugar in the United States to more than $20 per pound—twice what other countries pay.

One reason this subsidy still exists is that the sugar industry donates heavily to both political parties. The banana producers do, too, and this gives the Europeans another line of attack: They claim that the United States would probably not be so insistent about the bananas were it not for the fact that Carl Lindner, CEO of Chiquita, is a prominent Democratic Party donor and a chum of the president's. It has not gone unnoticed, for example, that the administration's interest in the banana trade has risen in proportion to the amount of soft money Lindner has deposited in Democratic National Committee coffers.

There are other complications, too—like the fact that the United States itself should be concerned with the economic health of nearby islands that could easily turn into sources of drug shipments or illegal immigration. The best result from this dispute would be an agreement to end the banana restrictions in a brief transitional period, during which time the Europeans could subsidize development and economic diversification in their former colonies. That will inevitably be complicated, but then complicated solutions are what you get when you peel . . . er, look closely at, trade fights. •

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NOTEBOOK

ONE PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS: The Clinton administration is hailing its new agreement to gain access to a suspicious military excavation in North Korea in exchange for continued food aid. The gigantic hole in the ground was discovered by U.S. intelligence last August. Ever since, the North Koreans have been haggling about letting the United States determine whether this represents a violation of the 1994 accord under which North Korea promised to abandon further nuclear weapons development. Yet the new deal is another hollow triumph for Clinton's policy of "engaging" the North. By May, when the inspections begin, the North Koreans will have had plenty of time to evacuate anything suspicious from the site; all the administration has achieved is the opportunity for a Korean reenactment of the UNSCOM farce in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. That, and to remind North Korea that the United States can be blackmailed. Of much greater import, we thought, was a March 13 *Washington Post* report by Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan. It seems that the U.S. government has a videotape smuggled from the famine zones of that Stalinist state, and the pictures are horrific: people retrieving the bodies of friends who starved to death or who were shot attempting to flee to China; emaciated children sucking on fish bones; a four-story prison for orphans. The State Department reports, quietly, that there are some 150,000 to 200,000 North Koreans imprisoned in gulag-style camps. These hellholes are not necessarily full of actual dissidents, however. In North Korea, the *Post* notes, those who complain about the government are shot immediately, and their family members are shipped to the camps. It's worth asking why we are just learning these things now. The U.S. government has long monitored North Korea by U-2 aircraft and satellites: as a result, the *Post* reports, we "can tell how many North Koreans it takes to change a flat tire on an army truck." Our intelligence agencies also undoubtedly have, or could obtain, detailed and dramatic photographic evidence of the vast North Korean gulag, including those so-called "9-27" prisons for orphans that were created almost four years ago at the express orders of dictator Kim Jong Il. Yet no such material has ever been publicly disseminated. Nor, of course, has the public actually seen the videotape whose contents someone leaked to the *Post*. The official reason for this is the protection of intelligence "sources and methods"—as if North Korea doesn't already know we're spying. Actually, the details of North Korea's barbarism have been and still are being kept under wraps for political reasons: the Clinton administration does not want to let the American public see too vividly what sort of a regime it is pursuing a policy of "engagement" with. It fears upsetting its cherished "dialogue" with the North, even though that policy has yielded only more North Korean missile proliferation and drug trafficking (neither of which, of course, is affected by the latest deal). It's time that the Clinton administration let the world see what America's eyes in the sky have seen inside North Korea—just as the administration chose, correctly, to let the world see U-2 pictures of mass graves in Bosnia in 1995. The truth could be our most powerful weapon in the battle against tyranny in North Korea, if indeed that is a battle the Clinton administration is disposed to wage.

TACTICAL MANEUVERS: Speaking of rogue states, the Clinton administration has finally dropped its threat to veto congressional legislation that calls for the United States to set up a defense system against just the sort of limited long-range missile attacks of which North Korea may soon be capable. (Such a defense system is still in development, but until now the administration had opposed it even in principle because the Russians claimed it would violate the 1972 U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.) Or has it? According to *The New York Times*, the two parties disagree about the meaning of legislation that just passed the Senate calling for the United States to forge ahead with an anti-missile system. "Democrats interpret [this] as language that is inextricably linked to the [Anti-Ballistic Missile] treaty," the paper reports. "But Republicans rejected any explicit language that would have tied deployment of an anti-missile system to adherence to the ABM treaty." The deal, in short, is classically Clintonian: a decision not to decide. It may help Clinton salvage his impending summit with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov—but the tough yet vitally important fight to go forward with such a system, even at the risk of violating the ABM Treaty and upsetting the Russians, will have to wait for another day.

BOOK NOTES: We are glad, and very sad, to note the appearance of *A Passion for Truth: The Selected Writings of Eric Breindel*, which has just been published by HarperCollins. Breindel died in March 1998; and, for this volume, John Podhoretz has selected scores of his columns from *The New York Post*. The columns show the full range and the full intensity of Breindel's philosophical and political passions; and they bring to mind also his courage in challenging the metropolitan liberal shibboleths on racial justice and social justice. His pieces on what he rightly called the "pogrom" in Crown Heights in 1991, and on the intellectual depravities of Leonard Jeffries, and on the moral importance of telling the truth about the history of communism in America are models of angry intelligence. (And the pieces in this book are only a part of Breindel's legacy: his mind was not a tabloid mind; he was also a scholar of cold war history, as the publication this spring of *The Venona Secrets: The Soviet Union's World War II Espionage Campaign Against the United States—and How America Fought Back*, which Breindel wrote with Herbert Romerstein, will demonstrate.) The book instructs, and edifies, and hurts. This extraordinary voice was stilled too soon. •

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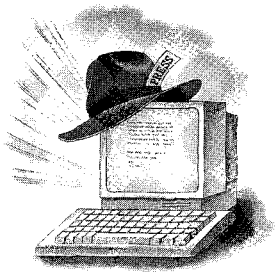
HOLLYWOOD DISPATCH

OSCAR WINNER

By John Meroney

At the age of 89, Elia Kazan is on his way to Hollywood for another Oscar night. This year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences presents the director of such classics as *On the Waterfront* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* with a lifetime achievement award. But the recognition is long overdue, and the reason Kazan was snubbed for so long has much to do with events that took place at the height of the cold war some 47 years ago.

The evening before Oscar night 1952, Kazan checked into one of the Hotel Bel Air's small, bungalow-like rooms. It was the age of Capra, Wilder, Ford, and DeMille—but Kazan was different. His films were harshly realistic, searingly emotional. And his actors—at times they seemed to become their characters. Kazan had arrived from New York because his film *A Streetcar Named Desire* was up for 13 Academy Awards, including best picture and best director.



Even after a few drinks, Kazan was too anxious to sleep. And it wasn't just the impending Oscars. The word in Hollywood that night was that, three months before, Kazan had testified in a closed session of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) about his membership in the Communist Party, which he joined in 1934 and left 18 months later. The prospect of having his testimony made public, coupled with his suspicion that Congress might call him back, gnawed at him.

So he called Marilyn Monroe, with whom he had once had a brief affair, to tell her he was in town. Monroe asked for Kazan's room number and said she would drop by later. Kazan left his door open; he managed to drift to sleep but was awakened by the rustling sheet as Monroe slipped into bed with him. "She lived in another world, the one I preferred to inhabit at the moment," he recalls in his 1988 memoir, *Elia Kazan: A Life*.

The next morning, Darryl Zanuck, the chairman of Twentieth Century Fox, tried to calm Kazan in a different way. Fox was one of the studios that had agreed in 1947 to an industry-wide policy banning Communists from the business—the "blacklist." Zanuck was sure Kazan would be subpoenaed again. And, like most studio execs, Zanuck cared more about his investment than politics. "Name the names," he counseled. "Who the hell are you going to jail for? You'll be sitting there, and somebody else will sure as hell name those people. Who are you saving?"

At the Oscars that night, *An American in Paris* picked up the top honor, and George Stevens, director of *A Place in the Sun*, walked away with the prize Kazan had hoped for. "I decided to go back east the next day and face the music," he wrote in his memoir. "I believed my days in that town and in that industry were over."

So, on April 10, 1952, Kazan was sworn in at another executive session of HUAC. Congressional investigators already knew the identities of party members; the true import of his testimony was personal—it confirmed his rupture with the party and the past. Kazan told the committee he "did wrong to withhold these names before, because secrecy serves the Communists and is exactly what they want." He gave the committee a synopsis of each of his films, none of which, he said, were party favorites. In fact, the party required members to sneak at least five minutes of doctrine into every film. But Kazan told the committee that his 1947 movie *Gentleman's Agreement*, about a magazine writer who pretends to be Jewish for a story on anti-Semitism, "shows Americans exploring a problem and tackling a solution."

A day later, Kazan purchased space in *The New York Times* to explain his actions and to urge fellow liberals to follow his lead. The statement (actually written by Kazan's wife, Molly) told how, as a 24-year-old stage manager and bit actor making $40 per week, he thought the party was the answer to the Depression and Hitler. He also addressed the blacklist: "The employment of a lot of good liberals is threatened because they have allowed themselves to become associated with or silenced by the Communists. Liberals must speak out."

This was Elia Kazan's antidote to a blacklist that had put Stalinists in the unemployment line—but also many who had never been party members. He told a former "comrade" that "I believe we should all of us name all of us, establish the truth of what went on.... [T]his thing would be off our backs." But his old colleagues demurred, and the blacklist remained on many people's backs—some into the late '60s. And, even though Kazan himself would make films for another 24 years, the conventional wisdom in Hollywood grew increasingly critical of those who, like him, cooperated with the committee. Ironically enough, many denounced Kazan and other name-namers as "un-American."

Now the cold war is over and, with it, Elia Kazan's ostracism. Still, this recognition did not come easily; it is due largely to the efforts of actor Karl Malden. Malden won best supporting actor for his role in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and has never forgotten his old director. Malden told me that, when Kazan was struggling over whether to break with the party, Malden wired Kazan: "No matter which way you go, I'm still your friend."

Malden has kept his word. For almost a decade, he has been campaigning for the industry that loves to bestow awards and accolades to give one to the man who gave Malden some of the best roles of his life—and gave America some of its most memorable cinema. About ten

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years ago, when Malden was president of the American Film Institute, he tried to persuade its board to give Kazan its prestigious lifetime achievement award. But Malden had to confront the view reportedly expressed by producer Gale Anne Hurd: "I don't care about the films he directed. He named names, and we just can't honor someone who did that." His effort failed.

This January, Malden, who is a member of the Motion Picture Academy's board of governors, made a passionate speech at the academy's headquarters on Wilshire Boulevard, arguing that Kazan be given an honorary Oscar. The academy, having already given its lifetime achievement award to many lesser figures, acceded. Malden's motion to honor Kazan passed without dissent. In fact, one of the 39 votes came from cinematographer Haskell Wexler, who had been blacklisted, but whom Kazan nevertheless hired to work on his 1963 picture, *America, America*. "The feeling was, 'Let bygones be bygones,'" Wexler told *Variety*.

Still, some refuse to bury the hatchet. Former Communists who still proudly celebrate their onetime membership have started a Committee Against Silence and will demonstrate on Sunday night a block away from the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. They're advertising in *Daily Variety*, urging the audience (contrary to the group's name) to sit in silence when Kazan comes on stage. Screenwriter Abraham Polonsky hasn't lost any of the old party defiance: "I'll be watching, hoping someone shoots him. It would no doubt be a thrill in an otherwise dull evening."

Obviously, Polonsky won't get his wish. But it will be interesting to see how today's stars and film moguls react to Kazan's presence—whether they applaud out of respect for an industry giant or sit on their hands out of indignation at the way he handled a difficult cold war dilemma. Kazan is being defended by Malden, Eva Marie Saint, and Charlton Heston. (A conservative group is asking attendees to wear American flag lapel pins in support of Kazan.) But *On the Waterfront* star Rod Steiger, who goes back to the Actors Studio with Kazan, told me: "A director is like a father, and, when we heard he testified, it was as though we had found our father f—ing our sisters. He was a traitor." Not very gracious, considering that Steiger gladly accepted a part in *On the Waterfront* in 1954—after the director had named names.

Still, one suspects that Kazan's critics may be left like Johnny Friendly in that classic final scene of *On the Waterfront*. After Terry Malloy decides that the only moral path is to testify against Friendly about corruption in the shipyard—to "fight him in the courtroom with the truth"—he becomes a hero to his fellow workers.

"You ratted on us," screams Friendly.

"From where you stand, maybe," says Malloy. "But I'm standing over here now. I was ratting on myself all them years.... I'm glad what I done to you!"

And Johnny Friendly is left standing there, all alone, raging into the wind.

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Why abortion is here to stay.

PRO-LIFESTYLE

By Christopher Caldwell

Texas Governor George W. Bush's remarks on abortion as he announced his presidential exploratory committee have jolted Republican politics. Bush claims to like his party's anti-abortion "tenor" and to favor a constitutional prohibition. But he's also a "realistic enough person to know that America is not ready to ban abortions." The underlying message: Bush is a pro-lifer you can vote for without fear that your abortion rights will be curtailed.

Bush's rivals for the nomination have called those statements an appalling surrender. "Our role," says Christian rightist Gary Bauer, "must be to help shape public opinion." Pat Buchanan admits that "we don't have the votes for a human life amendment" but predicts that, if Republicans keep fighting, they might gain force "vote after vote after vote." In other words, pro-lifers not only claim that theirs is the right side; they also believe that, properly handled, it is the winning side.

Their familiar reasoning goes like this: One-fourth of all Americans favor abortion on demand, while only one-tenth think it should be banned outright. But the two-thirds of Americans in the center draw from both extremes: they are wracked by moral misgivings about their support of legal abortion. Pro-lifers have always thought that, by focusing on the misgivings, anti-abortion Republicans can win over middle America.

They can't. That middle two-thirds is not up for grabs, because the misgivings are largely bogus. Whether or not Bush's is a principled stand, it is a pragmatic one. Because the main thing Bush is "realistic enough to know" is that a pro-life regime is not really something Americans want—it's just something they feel they ought to want.

The central political fact about abortion in America is that there's a lot of it. While America's annual abortion count has fallen to 1.3 million in the late '90s, it averaged 1.5 million a year between 1973 and 1996, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood. That's more than 34 million abortions. It's worth noting that the National Right to Life Organization does not contest these figures. Because, if we cast the net as widely as we can—from women who were pushing 40 in the early '70s to girls who are still teenagers today—only about 90 million women have passed through any part of childbearing age since *Roe* v. *Wade*. Even accounting for those who have had multiple abortions, that means close to half of American young

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women are using abortion—43 percent by age 45, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

In the polls, Americans profess ambivalence about abortion, openly supporting it only for "serious" reasons: for the health of the mother by 84 percent to twelve percent, for grave birth defects by 75 to 21, for rape by 77 to 19. They claim to oppose it for "trivial" reasons—for women who say they can't afford another baby by 42 to 53, for those who don't want another baby by 40 to 55, for those trying to avoid a shotgun wedding by 40 to 55. In other words, Americans claim not to back "lifestyle" abortions.

Yet the vast majority of abortions today are for reasons of lifestyle. Only about 14,000 women per year get abortions because of rape, incest, or to save their own lives. Of the other 1,286,000, three-fourths say a baby would interfere with work, school, or other responsibilities; two-thirds say they cannot afford a child; one-half say they do not want to be a single parent or are having problems with their male partner, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

Lifestyle always overpowers traditional morality in the war within the Western conscience, and nowhere more obviously than when abortions reach the level of pro-life parody, as they do more commonly than most abortion rights advocates will admit. The British gynecologist P. Greenhalgh writes of a rich mother of three who came to her for an abortion. She wanted a fourth child but not just yet, since the family had already reserved a ski vacation months down the line. Many ob-gyn specialists have stories like this, and, when one hears them, it's easy to see why women feel so guilty about owning up to the pedestrian nature of their reasons.

But then most people don't really consider lifestyle pedestrian, especially not their own. In a society organized around a succession of acquisitions and thrills, questions of lifestyle determine one's identity, one's rank in society, one's allegiances, one's loves and hates. It's not a matter of monolithic, time-honored religion versus itty-bitty, flighty lifestyle. It's religion—marginal vestige, subculture, private matter—versus lifestyle—the engine, the symbol, the central organizing principle of the most powerful nation in the history of mankind. The failure of the Southern Baptist Convention's call for a boycott of Disney gives you an indication of which worldview wins when they clash head-on.

Indeed, lifestyle as a values system grows steadily more powerful as capitalism grows steadily more beneficent. In a socially stratified era antedating mass contraception, an unwanted pregnancy generally meant you'd get stuck in a cramped, limited village existence with the first man you fell in love with, which is probably what would have happened anyway. Today, it still means getting stuck in a cramped, limited existence—but that's decidedly not what would have happened anyway. What one loses out on is a vastly expanded roster of life choices: education, travel, career advancement, class advancement, money, fine dining, entertainment, and sports, plus a recreational-sex career that can run at full-throttle (if that's what you want) for 30 years or more.

Republicans, at least the economic conservatives among them, are in a weak position to argue that Americans should throw all of this away. For in no other realm do they argue that the quest for lifestyle is a frivolous thing. The pro-choice position has much in common with their own. It is a market doctrine run amok in the nonmarket world. The underlying Republican defense of the American tendency to valorize, to monetize, to consumerize everything—from happiness to love to pride—has always been that the nature of those eternal pleasures is not altered a whit by having a dollar value attached to them. That ski vacation that the mother of three is aborting her child for might be a repository of all the happiness or love or pride she has.

Even where Americans claim to disapprove most strongly of abortion, they booby-trap their disapproval so that it never results in the actual curtailment of abortion rights. Take the crown jewel of Republican focus-group testing: partial-birth abortion. Following a barrage of graphic advertising and congressional legislation aimed at eliminating the procedure, 73 percent told pollsters they favored outlawing it. But, of those, 60 percent wanted an exception made for the health of the mother. And, while childbirth still has its dangers, it is so safe—with maternal death rates at a fraction of a percentage point—that the health-of-the-mother business is almost surely a cover for something else. Americans want to register their moral disapproval and keep the procedure available at the same time.

Pro-life Republicans themselves have grown so comfortable with abortion as a last resort that they can't even keep their lines straight. Take Dan Quayle's remark in the 1992 campaign that, if his daughter got pregnant, he'd "support her in whatever decision she'd make" on whether to abort. (Would he "support her" in anything else he claims to think is murder?) Or take Barbara Bush's calling abortion a "personal choice." (Had she and her ostensibly pro-life husband crossed swords in a real abort-or-not argument over the dinner table, who do you think would have prevailed?) This is a pro-life stance that comes from debate prepping, not conviction, let alone traditional morality. Which is to say that, when push comes to shove, when it's your daughter who's stuck marrying the psychopath or skipping Yale to take up single motherhood in your retirement home in St. Bart's, it's not a pro-life stance at all. It's idle moralism, freeloading off a pro-choice culture.

The story of Bob Barr, the thrice-married pro-life Georgia congressman who launched the impeachment effort against President Clinton, tells us even more about what pro-life sentiment means in the face of middle-class necessity. Barr's second wife, Gail, says in an affidavit that, in 1983, the couple found themselves in a situation straight out of a Clinton town meeting: saddled with two toddlers, Barr's law practice failing, no health insurance, she 38 years old, he in the middle of an extramarital affair and soon to remarry. When Gail got pregnant, Barr

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drove her to the abortion clinic and paid for the procedure. Barr's supporters insist he wasn't pro-life back then. They should realize that that goes without saying.

Abortion turns out to be an indispensable part of the normal middle-American toolkit. If Republicans like Governor Bush are giving up on the issue, it's because they've figured out that, even if Republicans win on abortion, they lose. The most they could hope to achieve is to shake middle-class life to its foundations in the name of values that, at the end of the day, neither they nor the middle class actually holds.

Americans' claims to be conflicted about abortion are a handy self-deception of the sort all nations engage in when a treasured self-image comes in conflict with a treasured reality. (Think of Britain, which persists in thinking the stiff upper lip central to its national character, even after a royal funeral that showed it to be the most emotional of advanced nations.) We should distrust the pro-life spin that Americans are more conflicted over abortion than citizens of other Western countries. They're not. What they exhibit is a rock-solid, European-style support for abortion, with American moral posturing plastered on top. The Bauer-Buchanan wing of the Republican Party would court voters by promising to expose them as hypocrites. Lots of luck.

Perhaps what Governor Bush has come to realize is that bringing down abortion would also bring down many of the implicit rules that govern American life. The result would be more than just a society with fewer abortions. It would be a society that actually *was* based on traditional moral values. That's a society that none of us would recognize and even many who call themselves pro-life would find intolerable.

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Is Russia ready for a film-director president?

A TSAR IS BORN

By Stephen Kotkin

Nikita Mikhalkov, the Oscar-winning Russian director of *Burnt by the Sun*, continually insists that he plans to participate in Russia's June 2000 presidential elections as a voter. He neglects to add that candidates also vote. Anyway, major directors, let alone ordinary voters, do not have film premieres at the Kremlin, as Mikhalkov did in February for his epic *The Barber of Siberia*, in which he plays Tsar Alexander III. While the guests arrived, a military orchestra in prerevolutionary dress uniform played "God Save the Tsar"—in the foyer of the hall built for Communist Party congresses. The movie, which cost $45 million—about $44 million more than the few other Russian films made recently—was followed by an unheard-of fireworks salute over the ancient onion domes. No political campaign could aspire to be launched more impressively.

Well before the event, Mikhalkov threw Moscow's political elite into hysteria by distributing the mere 5,000 invitations according to lists—one for the government, one for Yeltsin's court and presidential administration, one for the parliament—thereby inducing a fight for recognition of rank among officials. Anyone who was anyone had to be there—and they were, from Communist dullard Gennadi Zyuganov to nationalist sound-bite artist Vladimir Zhirinovsky to perennial liberal wallflower Grigory Yavlinsky. Former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, whose government sank $10 million into the movie, attended. The ever-ailing Boris Yeltsin failed to show, so Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov stood in as head of state—at a film showing. Is it possible to imagine Hollywood's all-time most expensive motion picture opening at, say, the U.S. Capitol?

Perhaps most telling of all was the behavior of Moscow city boss and announced presidential candidate Yuri Luzhkov. He skipped the premiere, sending word that he was occupied "inspecting sites" around Moscow—on a Saturday night. Then, on Sunday night, he granted the popular television newsmagazine "Itogi" a rare 45-minute prime-time interview, thus bumping Mikhalkov to "Itogi"'s secondary eleven o'clock evening slot. Moreover, earlier that same day—a religious holiday (the opening of Lent) that figures prominently in Mikhalkov's film—the usually uncooperative Luzhkov suddenly invited foreign journalists to a traditional celebration. The presidential front-runner launching a public relations blitz precisely when Mikhalkov steps into the spotlight?

Media commentators quickly asserted that analyses of

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Russian politics now had to take Mikhalkov into account. In fact, members of the Russian establishment have been quietly courting him for more than half a year. Business magnates have made unsolicited offers of funding. Political consultants have been competing to volunteer their unsought services. Major media outlets have made discreet indications of potential support. Mikhalkov, it seems, does not have to announce his candidacy. Russia might summon him.

Skeptics still outnumber opportunists, however, in part because the filmmaker remains a self-styled one-man movement. At a press conference in January, Mikhalkov announced, "I am my own party." But Russia is a big country. As Mikhalkov's own right-hand man, Dmitry Piorunsky, puts it: "He's the chairman of the Russian Cultural Foundation, with its one hundred and fifty employees, and of the Russian Filmmakers' Union with another thirty or so.... Where's his political organization?"

The answer may lie in a person who also has no political party but de facto controls the Russian state, and without whose blessing the Kremlin premiere could not have taken place: Prime Minister Primakov.

Like Mikhalkov, Primakov has been coy about his political plans. After this past August's humiliating default and the sacking of then-Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko, Russia's squabbling power brokers hit upon Primakov as the surprise replacement. Following the Soviet collapse, he had been tapped to restore order to Russia's intelligence service, whose disoriented officials were providing guided tours and gifts of supersecret documents to the CIA. Then he had been moved to the Foreign Ministry, which had come to resemble an eager subsection of the U.S. State Department (albeit one distinguished by inordinate self-importance). There he refocused attention on ignored CIS countries vital to Russia and gave Washington the understanding that, no less than China, Russia would not be taking marching orders from Foggy Bottom. Quietly, his authority at home grew. When asked to form a government, he appeared to accept reluctantly; duty called.

In power, Primakov has managed to deepen his appeal. This is no mean feat in a country with a largely nonviable industrial economy, unpayable loans in the multibillions of dollars, a leaking cold war doomsday complex, an invalid president with dictator-like authority, and a trouble-loving parliament of many incompetents and some lunatics. The new prime minister began by demonstrably pursuing political accord and stealthily acquiring levers of effective authority. Elevating associates to important positions and finding political roles for as many top politicians as possible, even if they held no official post, he has multiplied his allies and neutralized potential enemies. He has maintained the backing of the ever-jealous Yeltsin. And he has refrained from articulating his own views, encouraging all parties to fantasize about his eventual preferential support. It has been a virtuoso tactical performance.

Brilliant political tactics, however, will not do much for Russia's economy, and Primakov—partly by design, partly by sheer inability—has no economic program. His vague call for a "regulated market" remains a slogan, for he has discovered that it is Russia's bribe-collecting state officialdom that requires "regulation" (and drastic downsizing). Even the pro-reform Yavlinsky concedes that "without a real fight against corruption, it is not possible to solve a single economic problem in Russia." This circumstance makes Primakov's lack of an economic program almost logical. And, in contrast to his predecessors, who usually made a show of going after minor—albeit attention-getting—targets, Primakov does seem committed to getting a handle on the malfeasant state. He has censured his own Cabinet members in front of the press, so that ministers in turn demand greater accountability from their subordinates. While taking care to protect the interests and reputation of Yeltsin, Primakov has also moved to drive out those who, through their unofficial connections to the court, have wielded inordinate influence—most notoriously Boris Berezovsky.

The "Jewish Rasputin," as the cunning Ph.D. in systems operations is impolitely known, has crushed all previous would-be vanquishers, including IMF darling Anatoly Chubais, but this time Berezovsky may have met his match. It is not just that Primakov's government has sought to reclaim control from Berezovsky over Russia's partially privatized main television network, ORT, in a loans-for-shares deal whereby the state can reclaim equity for credits that the bankrupt station will not be able to repay. It is that the Berezovsky-controlled airline Aeroflot—whose president, Valery Okulov, is Yeltsin's son-in-law—suddenly dismissed several longtime Berezovsky people and helped trigger an investigation of a Swiss company where Berezovsky has allegedly been parking Aeroflot's hard-currency earnings.

In the coup de grace, the tax police raided the offices of Aeroflot, as well as those of the Berezovsky-controlled oil company Sibneft, and Atoll, Berezovsky's private security agency, which has been accused of eavesdropping on the president and his family. As one deputy section chief of the presidential administration gleefully told me in prison-yard slang, "A big chopping is under way." For a politician with few conspicuous achievements, delivering Berezovsky's head would provide a political boost. Skillful anti-Berezovsky leaks to the press have already raised Primakov's ratings.

Manifestly political, Primakov's clampdown has also been selective. He has, for instance, chosen not to challenge the greatest of all Russian oligarchs, Rem Vykahirev, who manages with little oversight the federal government's huge interest in Gazprom, a monopoly with yearly revenues in the tens of billions of dollars that is notoriously delinquent in paying its taxes. Gazprom *does* pay a supposed 2.4 billion rubles of its four-billion-ruble monthly tax bill, accounting for up to one-third of state revenues. And Primakov may be mindful of the fact

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that, when the previous government went on the offensive against Gazprom, the company temporarily curtailed its tax payments. Primakov's indulgence may also be related to Gazprom's 30 percent stake in NTV, the only fully private television network in Russia, and its substantial shares in the partially privatized ORT and in regional stations, not to mention many central and regional newspapers. With Gazprom's tax break recently affirmed, Vyakhirev publicly stated his support for Primakov.

Selective as it has been, the anti-corruption drive could soon reach beyond Berezovsky to other tycoons. Investigations have already been launched against top military officers and even against one former Primakov associate who runs a research institute. Longtime academic colleagues with whom Primakov remains in contact concur that he abhors corruption. He seems in many ways closest to Yuri Andropov and the former leader's "discipline" campaign, which is where Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika came from. Nearly 15 years into "reform," a diminished, fatigued Russia may have come full circle. But, this time around, the struggle against state corruption takes place against the background of national electoral politics.

Given the competition, Primakov certainly makes for a strong candidate. Zyuganov faces a challenge for his party's nomination, and, in any case, the Communist electorate has a hard ceiling of 20 to 25 percent. Alexander Lebed, who finished third last time around, has apparently gone into terminal decline. Viktor Chernomyrdin is history. The Belarus pretender, Alexander Lukashenko, is not a citizen of Russia. Thus, even at this early juncture, the presidential race is shaping up as a two-man contest: Primakov versus Luzhkov. Yavlinsky and the liberals, who cannot win, appear likely to play a substantial swing role, and, from the evidence of the past several months, both Yavlinsky and his biggest supporter, the highly influential private NTV, may side with Primakov. Which way the regions will go is an open question. While Primakov has lent his mostly invisible hand to some 30 regional heads seeking to form a loose coalition called Voice of Russia, a challenge to the more formalized Fatherland movement built by Luzhkov, Luzhkov has started organizing the country's mayors in opposition to "disloyal" governors.

Speculation that Primakov will eventually cut a deal with Luzhkov ignores the fact that Luzhkov would never settle for the second-fiddle prime ministership under Primakov. And, according to those who advise him, Primakov cannot abide Luzhkov's crony-capitalist style of rule. Similar sentiments are widespread in Yeltsin's presidential administration and inner circle. During an evening gathering in late January at a dacha in Barvikha—the elite enclave not far from where Lenin died—I was repeatedly and disdainfully told of Luzhkov that "Russia has already had a bald guy in a worker's cap." The prospect of stopping Luzhkov, who is a formidable politician of vast resources and talent, has energized much of the political class. "All against one; one against all," as the magazine *Profil* put it.

Which brings us back to Mikhalkov. Primakov has repeatedly denied having presidential ambitions. Even so, he can still be expected to answer the "call of duty." Yet Primakov will be older than 70 by election time (and would be close to 76 at the completion of a first term). His lack of charisma and shortcomings as a campaigner are also obvious. These considerations direct attention toward Mikhalkov. The 53-year-old filmmaker, who meets often with Primakov, has announced he will support the prime minister if he chooses to run. It is conceivable that Primakov could continue to try to put the Russian house in order, then turn over the formidable resources of the state to a Mikhalkov campaign. Or Primakov could seek to reinstitute the post of vice president and forge a Primakov-Mikhalkov ticket. Whether or not he assumes the mantle of tsar himself in the interim, Primakov is poised to play tsar-maker—provided the current tsar doesn't remove him first.

Whatever maneuvers in the corridors of power influence who gets on the ballot, the voters will decide the outcome. And here Mikhalkov's *The Barber of Siberia* could serve as the ultimate "exploratory committee" as it travels the country. Picture-perfect pretty, Mikhalkov's Russia is mythic Hollywood in style but not in content. Around a weak love story involving a superficial Irish-American prostitute named Jane and an opera-singing Russian military cadet named Tolstoy, he creates a big-hearted, fatalistic world of mishaps, official lies, and penal servitude that is defiantly enigmatic to outsiders but extraordinarily resonant with Russians. In its first week at Moscow's Kodak CinemaWorld, 42,000 tickets were sold (compared with 31,000 for *Titanic*). Moscow-based critics, presented with the country's first major film in years, denounced it. But some grudgingly saw merit in it. Nikolai Svanidze, a tough-minded television commentator, opined that "yes, it's sentimental. But it's a beautiful sentimentality." At the Kremlin premiere, the deeply cynical spectators startled one another by clapping during the film, by not repairing to the lavish liquid buffet for more than three hours, and by standing in applause at the end. Most of my immediate neighbors spent the film alternately in titters and tears. Ministers, generals, world-class embezzlers—weeping? The weekly *Kommersant-vlast* observed that "for the longest time now no one has been able to speak of Russia as a great country." But Mikhalkov can.

Ultimately, however, the land portrayed in the film is unsettling: a Russian general's glass-eating drunken spree, a Russian cadet who speaks fluent English but cannot fix a fan, the envy that "drives the country like the steam engine drives Britain," the misplaced heroism, the nearly blind loyalty to the emperor. "*The Barber* is not about tsarism or the 'glorious' epoch of Alexander III," Mikhalkov insists. "It's about preserving worthy traditions. It's about dignity and honor. Above all, it's about Russia, a maker and breaker of people. There is no 'happy end.' " In politics as in cinema? •

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Algeria's war winds down.

CALM THE CASBAH

By Roger Kaplan

ALGIERS

Sometimes the best place to measure the course of a civil war can be at an outdoor café. In Bab el Oued, a quarter of this city near the fabled Casbah that has long been known as a stronghold of Islamist terrorist groups, I asked a young policeman if we could stop for a cup of coffee. We sat at a table. Only a short while ago, this never could have happened. Policemen worked in groups of three as they accompanied visitors, for fear of terrorist gangs. They insisted on standing at the bar rather than taking a table. "It has changed a lot," my companion agreed when I pointed this out. "Policemen used to be shot in coffee shops, even in their own neighborhoods." These days, however, you feel an almost normal atmosphere. In November, I took long walks with an Algerian journalist through downtown neighborhoods in the capital, stopping at tiny restaurants and cafés, visiting shops and gardens. Another friend tells me he has resumed his regular visits to the swimming pool. The police hardly even try to prevent you from visiting former no-go zones anymore. "No problem, *monsieur*," they say. "Just tell us where you're going, OK?"

Though it's of little comfort to those who continue to join the list of victims, the horrible war between the Algerian state and Islamist extremists that began in 1992 may finally be winding down. And the surprising result is that, after tens of thousands of deaths, the government is winning. Only a few years ago, it was fashionable to view Algeria as the "next Iran"; the U.S. State Department was seriously weighing how to deal with an Islamist successor regime. "I will admit," an Algerian security official told me, "that, at that point, I was expecting to go down fighting." Journalists were murdered, and the equivalent of the National Press Center was bombed. Many policemen and their families were moved to barracks.

Today, the violence is by no means over—Bab el Oued itself was the scene of a car bombing shortly after my visit. But the fundamentalists have been beaten back, and both their political and military wings, if not all political movements based on fundamentalist ideas, enjoy virtually no support among ordinary Algerians. An Islamist victory is no longer foreseeable, much less likely.

How did this happen? A certain kind of Western conventional wisdom attributes the blunting of Islamic terror to state counterterror. And, to be sure, Algeria's security forces have committed their share of excesses in the campaign against the guerrillas as the quite open complaints here—by human rights groups as well as politicians and ordinary citizens—make clear. But, while this is a crucial issue if Algeria is truly to restore the law and order the regime says the fundamentalists challenged, it is not the whole story.

No counterinsurgency can succeed unless the state that is waging it comes to be perceived as legitimate by the majority of the population. And, in this regard, the Algerian state, for all its violence and corruption, has profited by the contrast with the almost ghoulishly violent Islamists. Moreover, the state has rebuilt a set of political institutions that also enjoy increasing credibility among the populace. When Algerians go to the polls on April 15 to choose a successor to President Liamine Zeroual—the man largely responsible for restoring the state's legitimacy—the election may be flawed but will still be one of the most open and credible any Arab society has ever managed to hold. Arezki Ait-Larbi, a widely respected journalist who has had more than his share of trouble with the authorities, notes that this year's campaign is "more open" than the 1995 contest, which gave Zeroual a huge capital of credibility.

Matoub Lounes almost certainly had his rifle in his hands when he was shot to death on a country road near his home last June. He was from a hamlet on the outskirts of Tizi-Ouzou, the major city in the Kabylia region of Algeria. But, until just a few weeks before his death, he had been living in France to avoid terrorist threats. Enormously popular, he sang of love and politics in the Berber language, which is spoken by one Algerian in five. Credit for the assassination was claimed by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), a terrorist organization that had rejected a truce that the army had negotiated with another insurrectionary group the previous year. Lounes, 42, was a symbol of the Algeria half the

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people you talk to say they want: tolerant in matters of religion and way of life, multicultural in languages and tradition, open to the diversities of Algeria's location as the great hub of the Mediterranean world. But he was also the embodiment of everything militant Islamists say they loathe: secularism, irreverence, modernism.

Algeria won its independence from France in 1962 after a seven-year war. After more than a few scores were settled brutally, Col. Houari Boumedienne seized power in 1965 from Ahmed Ben-Bella and imposed respect for his regime as a leader of the "new nations" emerging from European decolonization. Despite the country's vast oil wealth, Boumedienne and his successors in the 1980s managed to perpetuate both political archaisms (single-party rule) and economic stagnation (a corrupt and inefficient state sector). Islamic fundamentalists, who had become increasingly active in the '80s, federating the majority of their currents in an Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), offered a simple, all-embracing answer to the country's drift: theocracy.

The fundamentalists probably represented only about a quarter of the electorate. They frightened many Algerians, both by making it clear they wanted to repress "Western" influences (including the French language), and by being up-front about how they intended to do this. "Unbelievers must be killed as they would substitute their authority for God," Ali Belhadj, an impassioned and charismatic leader of the FIS, said in 1989.

Yet, in December 1991, the FIS took a commanding lead in the first round of the country's first multiparty parliamentary elections, which it had quite openly stated would be Algeria's last. The army moved in to annul the results. Many Algerians claim that Islamist bullying—including murders—and vote fraud accounted for their strong electoral showing. Islamists claim that this is retrospective justification for the army's move against them in January 1992 and that all they did was encourage people to lead virtuous lives, while organizing charities, unemployment offices, and educational programs. When, several months later, the FIS took up arms, it put the Algerian state in the awkward position of fighting back after having overthrown what seemed to most of the outside world a legitimate election.

It was in the next three years that most of the predictions about the imminent collapse of Algeria were voiced. From a distance—indeed, from the inside as well—the FIS's armed wings appeared able to win power militarily. Among the prominent secularists to be cut down by the terrorists were Tahar Djaout, who was, in his thirties, one of Algeria's most promising writers; Said Mekbel, director of the independent daily *Le Matin*; and Mohamed Abderrahmani, director of the state-owned *El Moudjahid* and the dean of Algerian journalism. Omar Belhouchet, the director of the fiercely secularist newspaper *El Watan* and a fierce opponent of the FIS, escaped a machine-gunning of his car. In 1994, Islamists murdered Redha Aslaoui, a popular Casbah dentist who refused to curtail his practice despite the growing terrorist presence in the quarter. This killing was widely viewed as a strike against his wife, Leila. A devout Muslim, a human rights activist, and a sometime high-government official, she had opposed any compromise with the FIS so long as it espoused violence.

It might appear that the radicals were focusing only on prominent pro-government personalities or secular cultural leaders. And they certainly did seek out intellectuals, academics, doctors, feminist leaders, dramatists (such as Abdelkader Alloula, director of the National Theater of Oran), and popular singers. The FIS's armed groups even denounced *rai*, a homegrown variant of rock 'n' roll, as immoral and shot some of its practitioners. The killings of foreigners reduced the number of visitors to a minimum. Embassy staffs were limited to essential workers, who stayed in their compounds.

However, the vast majority of the terror's victims were ordinary people. A divorced woman in a poor neighborhood, a wine merchant, a high school French teacher—all such people risked harassment and murder. As the violence escalated, it became a moot question whether the Islamists' rhetoric and the zeal of their street toughs were not to be taken literally and whether there might be moderates willing to eschew violence. The Islamists' campaign of large-scale massacres between the summer of 1997 and early 1998 provoked cries for a U.N. inquiry, which eventually took place. Chaired by Mario Soares, the former president of Portugal, it blamed the bloodshed on the GIA—which, in most instances, had already quite openly taken "credit."

When I was in Algeria recently, the hottest area was still around the cities of Ain Defla and Chlef, about 90 miles west of Algiers. The massacre in the village of Moussa Aberrahmane on November 12 was typical. The survivors claimed that they had requested arms from the state but that the authorities had not responded. The communal guards—who are not as well armed or trained as regular police—came under fire while the terrorists rampaged through the houses, killing several infants. The terrorists then fell back into the thick forests that lie between Tipaza and Ain Defla.

There was more violence in Ain Defla during the weeks of Ramadan, the month-long season of purification that has always seemed to bring out the worst in the GIA. In the last week of December, the terrorists slaughtered 15 people near the town of Khemis Meliana and 19, including eleven children, at a place called Zmala. The killing at Khemis Meliana was carried out with the kind of savagery that captured the world's attention (briefly) during another terrorist wave in the Mitidja valley in the summer of 1997. An entire family was slaughtered with axes and knives according to the account in *Le Matin*, and two sisters were found burned

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to death, still clutching each other, in a separate room.

Horrific as it is, none of this mayhem seems to be advancing the terrorists' ostensible goal: the seizure of power. The Islamists' brutality only made it easier for the military-backed authorities to present themselves—both at home and abroad—as the legitimate side. This set the stage for the government's adoption of a new counterinsurgency strategy based on "legitimate defense groups," which are popularly known as *patriotes*. These are local citizens armed and trained by the government to provide village-level defense in areas where the army and police cannot patrol. The strategy, unoriginal in the annals of counterinsurgency and tried by the United States in South Vietnam and El Salvador, was initiated in Algeria by local people and is, by all evidence, working. "We had to request weapons," a *patriote* leader explained to me. "All we had was a few old hunting rifles and pistols. Only then did they accept and put the program in a legal framework," which, in fact, was used to curb some self-defense groups accused of operating rackets in their villages.

In Algiers, both critics and supporters of the government told me that the GIAs are now unwilling even to risk going into villages where the *patriotes* are well organized. The groups are credited with bringing back some semblance of peace to areas where the insurrection was extremely active, notably the Mitidja valley and Kabylia. "We know who the bandits are, since, in many cases, we grew up with them," a local *patriote* leader told me near Boufarik, a town between Blida and Algiers that was particularly hard hit by terror in the early '90s. I asked if this meant there was indeed a true element of civil strife in this war, neighbor against neighbor divided by ideology or religious fervor. He shook his head. "They try to call this a religious war," he said. "These are bad Muslims."

The enlistment of volunteers in the self-defense organizations was at once a reproach directed at the army and a vote of confidence in the government. It was also a sign of the government's confidence in ordinary people. This was, significantly, overlooked by those who said the *patriote* groups were mercenaries, common criminals, or opportunists. For instance, the leaders of the Socialist Forces Front, a Kabylia-based secularist party whose origins go back to the war of independence, argued that the *patriotes* were thugs doing the security forces' dirty work. They were all but accused of being death squads by foreign journalists and human rights activists. Since there was no evidence to support this charge (which the Soares commission examined), the argument was made by elimination: *Who else* would kill the villagers of the Mitidja, especially during the ghastly summer of 1997, except the enemies of the armed men whom the villagers (previously) had supported?

Close observers such as Arezki Ait-Larbi, who have not been indulgent toward the government's security methods, believe the responsibility for the massacres in the Mitidja and elsewhere is not controversial. The GIA gangs claimed responsibility, and the survivors blamed them. It is impossible, of course, for a foreign reporter such as myself to prove that the word of a distraught young mother crying that her husband was killed proves anything. And it is also true, as the editorial columns of the country's dailies made clear, that the army's inability to protect citizens was universally deplored. But no one who was on the scene or lived in the fought-over areas has suggested the survivors' stories are anything but credible.

To be sure, in a conflict such as this, it would be unusual if some men, their families destroyed, did not exact revenge on their enemies. Nor should it be surprising to see some of these men's leaders take on the qualities of local political chieftains. I happened to be having lunch with a *patriote* leader when one of his assistants mentioned that a local candidate had complained of fraud in a recent local election and was threatening to boycott the assembly. "Boycott?" the *patriote* leader huffed. This was a man whose brothers had been murdered by the GIA and whose political background was on the left. "Take their seats," he said. "Tell them to try and get them back."

But the *patriotes* alone would not have sufficed to turn the tide of the war. The state needed to adopt political reforms as well, to overcome the perception that the Islamists were fighting to vindicate the democratic mandate that had been denied them. In another parallel to El Salvador, the junta that was running Algeria in the wake of the annulled 1992 vote sought to recoup legitimacy with new elections—albeit ones from which the insurgents were excluded. In November 1995, Algerians voted in what were then, despite the obvious limitations, arguably the freest presidential elections ever held in the Muslim Arab world. Certainly nothing like this had been seen before in the Maghreb.

The winner, with 61 percent of the vote, was the army-backed independent, Zeroual. Among the runners-up was an Islamist candidate, Mahfoud Nahnah, who had disavowed violence (several of his activists have been murdered). Nahnah supported economic liberalism and stated clearly that, should he win at the ballot box, he would accept being voted out of power. Zeroual sought to reward these moderate Islamists. On such issues as the promotion of traditional Islamic family law and the promotion of Arabic over French, he felt he had to please Nahnah's "Islamo-conservatives." This alienated hard-line secularists, yet Zeroual thought it necessary to send a strong signal that the government was anti-terror, not anti-Islam. The same logic lay behind the subsequent incorporation of six of Nahnah's men in Zeroual's Cabinet.

The Zeroual government pursued a program of "vote and fight," as Zeroual's former prime minister, Ahmed Ouyahia, put it to me. The idea was to take up where the government had stumbled in 1992—to insti-

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tute a multiparty political system (there were parliamentary elections in 1997, in which a pro-Zeroual party won a plurality of seats) but with guardrails, while making no concessions on the state's monopoly of force. The latter point explains why, when the military wing of the FIS, the Islamic Salvation Army, which is somewhat more moderate in its tactics than the GIA, agreed to a truce in the summer of 1997, the deals were made sector by sector by commanders in the field, without official sanction from the president in Algiers. By all evidence, the truce with the FIS "emirs" has held, even as the GIA has intensified its terror campaigns in such strategic places as the back country of Ain Defla.

Zeroual is neither an orator nor a charismatic leader. But he stuck to his strategy of restoring the state's authority. The institutions would be made to work, even if he was accused of condoning electoral fraud. Despite cries of "social terrorism" by the unions, the government put the country through a painful but necessary economic restructuring that brought massive layoffs in the bloated industrial sector, but which could make the country attractive to foreign investors when the strife finally ends.

Algeria is still in deep trouble, with a young population (70 percent under 35) that sees few prospects for the future. The most popular politician in Algeria will be the one who presides over an increase in employment and housing supply. None of those who propose to succeed Zeroual on April 15 has had much to say on this front. Zeroual announced last September that he would not run, for reasons that—apart from his health—he has kept to himself, though his entourage, particularly his closest adviser, Mohammed Betchine, has been accused of corruption.

The candidates range from moderate Islamists such as Abdullah Djaballah—Mahfoud Nahnah has been ruled ineligible—on the "right" to Hocine Ait-Ahmed (Ben-Bella's erstwhile comrade and rival) on the "left." Abdelaziz Bouteflika, a former foreign minister with the advantage of having stayed out of politics during the past several years, and Mouloud Hamrouche, a former prime minister with a reputation as a reformer, will fight for the "center."

The transparency of the election, the level of participation, the resonance it has in the international media—all of these factors, of course, will help determine how much more legitimacy the Algerian state can acquire by holding this vote. And a serious mishap, such as an upsurge in violence by the GIA (foreshadowed, perhaps, by a shootout in downtown Algiers in early March and by police sweeps in Bab el Oued) or a loss of nerve by the army that would cause it to meddle in the contest, would matter even more. Still, if the election comes off more or less respectably, the Algerians will have made more headway toward reconciling modern political institutions with an Islamic society—in ways that, at least in the short term, will not compensate for the stolen lives and wasted years. This is news. •

Bill Bradley searches for a reason to run.

JOURNEY MAN

By John B. Judis

Bill Bradley, wearing a green jacket and huge yellow all-weather Rockports, sits beneath a giant stuffed caterpillar at the children's museum in Londonderry, New Hampshire, with a mother and two children on either side of him, while reporters take notes and photographers snap pictures. Bradley asks the children what they want to be when they grow up. After a few minutes, the conversation stalls. "Do you know what I am doing here?" Bradley asks them. "I am having my picture taken, and I am running for president." Bradley is being ironic. He is making fun of himself as a candidate.

Bradley has always gone his own way, whether in postponing an NBA career to go to Oxford or in breaking with Democratic colleagues to vote for Contra aid. His current presidential campaign is no exception. It appears based as much on listening to voters (and even those too young to vote) as on speaking to them.

When he is asked at a New Hampshire citizens' forum what his most valuable quality is, he says: "I think being sensitive to people, listening to them. I am a good listener. I like to listen. I learn from people's stories. I am not assuming I have all the answers but going to them with great respect. Finding their own sense of their own lives and, from that, putting together what I think you need to do in this country in order to lead. The combination of listening and leadership are the two qualities."

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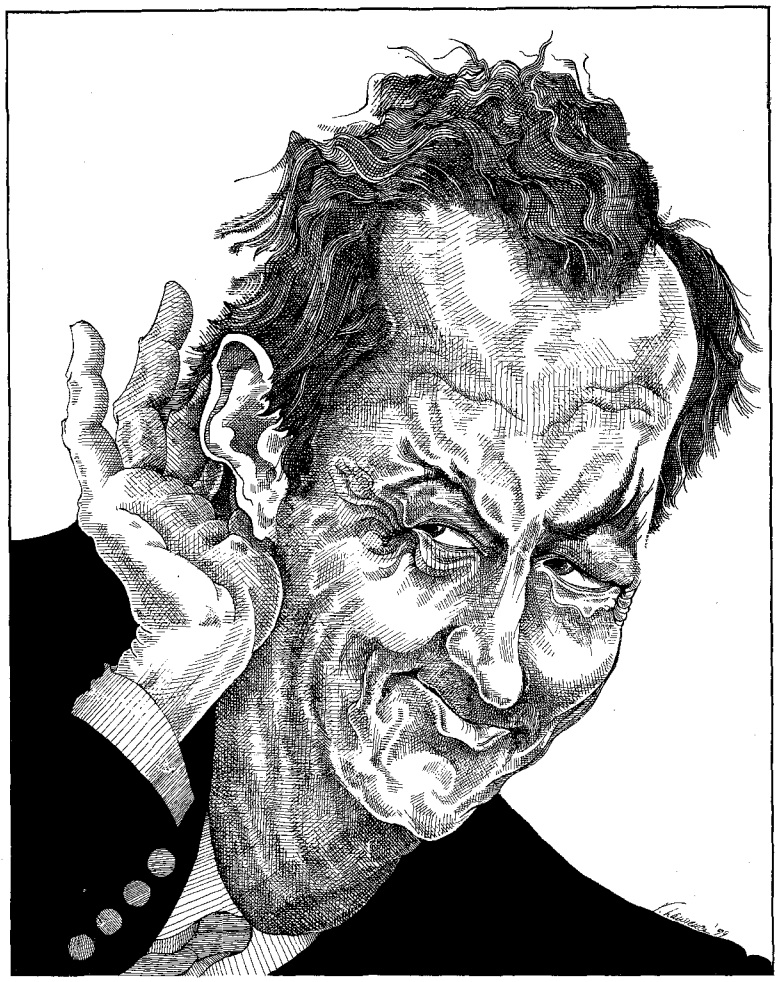
Bradley's rival for the Democratic nomination is Vice President Al Gore, but Bradley is reluctant to say what differentiates his candidacy from Gore's. When he tries to do so, he is vague and somewhat unconvincing. He is also reluctant to spell out what he will do as president. He told me: "This is the listening phase of the campaign. I am out there meeting people and getting to know who they are and what they believe. This is not programmatic. Ultimately you get programmatic, but not now."

For all these peculiarities, there is something attractive about Bradley's candidacy. Washington is full of politicians who aspire to be president, but few are deadly earnest about what they hope to accomplish and about the standards to which they hold themselves, just as few can laugh at their own ambition and earnestness. Bradley has always had that unusual combination. Bradley was also a very effective senator, winning support for controversial measures even though Republicans controlled either the White House or the Senate or both for 14 of the 18 years he served.



BILL BRADLEY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Notwithstanding his reluctance to run against the Clinton administration, Bradley has cogent criticisms of the past six years, and he advocates embryonic programs that, when they emerge later in the campaign, should make much clearer his differences with Clinton and, by extension, Gore. Without explicitly saying so, Bradley is gradually positioning himself as the candidate of political reform and moral awakening against the corruption and drift of the Clinton administration. Such a position may or may not win him the nomination, but it will at least provide the basis of a constructive and important debate within the Democratic Party and the nation.

Some of Bradley's former senatorial colleagues who back Gore have questioned Bradley's effectiveness as a senator. One says he lacked "follow-through." In his day, however, Bradley was admired by both Democrats and Republicans for his ability to devise and win bipartisan support for innovative legislation. He developed the original framework for the Tax Reform Act of 1986, which established a model for tax legislation by lowering tax rates while closing numerous loopholes. He got the bill passed and signed by letting Senator Bob Packwood and the Reagan administration take credit for the final result. In 1992, as chairman of the Water and Power Subcommittee of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Bradley secured a major compromise water bill, including conservation measures and a shift in resources from California farms to cities.

Bradley also pursued a deep interest in international economic issues. In the early '80s, he proposed that banks that had recycled petrodollars from OPEC into questionable loans to underdeveloped countries forgive part of their Third World loan portfolio as a way to restart growth in Latin America and other potential U.S. trading partners around the world. The Reagan administration rejected Bradley's plan, but George Bush's secretary of the Treasury, Nicholas Brady, adopted a version of it. Bradley was an early critic of the draconian conditions that the International Monetary Fund set for its loans to debtor countries—a stance that has gained credence in the wake of the Asian financial crisis.

In the late '80s, Bradley began studying the Soviet economy. He warned repeatedly against loans to an economy that, short of drastic reform, was destined to tank. His speeches on the Soviet economy, like his statements on the IMF, sound remarkably current today and would have made useful reading in the Clinton State Department. An ardent free-trader, Bradley was a prime mover behind both the North American Free Trade Agreement and the 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Bradley first voiced the idea of a free trade pact with Mexico in the mid-'80s, and he was the only American on a seven-person GATT study group that began meeting in 1985 to develop the framework for a new agreement.

In the late '80s, Bradley dissented from the prevailing pessimism about America's economic future. In an

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interview in 1989, I asked him about Paul Kennedy's then-fashionable thesis that the U.S. economy was in inexorable decline. Bradley insisted (to my utter disbelief but, as it turned out, presciently) that we were on the verge of a high-tech boom: "If you take the area that goes from, say, New York and New Jersey down to Virginia, down to Florida, cross over to Austin, then to California, and then up the coast, there is such incredible dynamism in these economies, largely from industries that have great potential growth."

Bradley was impossible to stereotype politically. In 1981, he was the only member of the Senate Finance Committee to vote against the Reagan tax cuts. In 1982, he infuriated teachers' unions by backing tuition tax credits for private schools as a remedy for the failings of inner-city public schools; then he refused to go along with the Reagan administration's plan because it did not preclude using credits at schools that practiced racial segregation. In 1986, he voted for Contra aid to create pressure for negotiations but, soon afterward, withdrew his support when he learned that the administration wanted to use the Contras to overthrow the Sandinistas. In 1988, he was the only senator to fight against sanctioning the Japanese electronics firm Toshiba and a Norwegian company for secretly and illegally selling submarine parts to the Soviet Union. In 1990, he was one of only nine senators to vote against the confirmation of Justice David Souter to the Supreme Court. Some of these decisions (opposing Toshiba sanctions and Souter) were bad, and some (opposing Reagan tax cuts and backing the Contras as a negotiating tool) were good, but together they set a standard for political individuality and independence.

When Bradley has erred, it often has been because he thinks he has to stick up for a weaker party or group, even to the extent of ignoring its shortcomings. Take welfare reform. The fact that he opposed it because he feared it was too harsh is certainly defensible. But his refusal to see any benefit whatsoever in requiring able-bodied recipients to find work suggests an excessively idealized vision of the poor. Bradley's opposition to trade pressure on Japan appeared to stem not just from concerns about undermining our military and diplomatic ties but also from a concern that this pressure was being fed by an underlying racism or xenophobia.

Bradley's principal shortcoming has been political—not as a Senate legislator but as a candidate and an aspiring national leader. As a young basketball player, he practiced jump shots with his eyes closed, memorably explaining his ability to make the shots based on "a sense of where you are." Yet Bradley has lacked just such a sixth sense in elective politics. His political abilities were suspect even before he almost lost to a virtually unknown and underfinanced Christine Todd Whitman in his 1990 Senate race (see "Bill Folds," by John B. Judis, TNR, January 28, 1991). He is a terrible public speaker. His monotone is rendered somewhat inaudible by his efforts to deepen his voice. His timing and pacing are atrocious. But more important, Bradley lacks a politician's ability to make contact with an audience. Clinton has been deservedly mocked for his statement "I feel your pain," but it is exactly that capability that separates the brilliant politicians from the journeymen.

The best American politicians and political leaders—Franklin Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Ronald Reagan, and Clinton himself—have had this political sense. The less successful, like Jimmy Carter and George Bush, have not. Bradley is very much in the latter camp (as, to be sure, is Gore). Some politicians, like Reagan and Clinton, seem to acquire this kind of empathy from the humble circumstances of their birth. They are able to identify with the distress of an unemployed worker because, at some time, they, or someone close to them, had that experience or an experience very much like it. Other politicians, like Franklin Roosevelt, went through protracted crises where they were stripped of their self-confidence and thrown back upon a common human identity. Roosevelt's decade-long recovery from polio indelibly shaped his social attitudes. (John Sedgwick, writing in *GQ*, once wonderfully described the WASPy former Massachusetts Governor William Weld as "Franklin Roosevelt before the polio.") Bradley has had his share of misfortune and personal ups and downs, but he was born in comfortable surroundings, the only child of Crystal City, Missouri's most prominent banker, and enjoyed an unbroken string of successes as a student, basketball player, and senator.

This is not to say Bradley is indifferent to pain and hardship. He has an active social conscience, as evidenced by his longstanding crusade on behalf of Sioux land rights. (Don't look for Bradley to contest the South Dakota primary.) But his relations not just with the least fortunate and oppressed but also with middle-class Americans are guided by conscience rather than empathy. He remains socially separate from much of America. As if to acknowledge this, Bradley hired sociologist Barbara Whitehead in 1989 to set up secret meetings for him with fishermen in New Orleans and wheat farmers in the Dakotas. He would spend a day or two trying to understand people who were different from himself. Can one imagine Clinton or Reagan doing this, except as a publicity stunt? They don't have to, but Bradley, aware of his social detachment, feels that he does. It's not a fatal flaw, but much of Carter's and Bush's difficulties as president were due to their lack of strong political instincts. Bradley would face similar problems.

Bradley began making presidential moves well before last December. In November 1995, he engaged in a conference call with Paul Tsongas, Gary Hart, and Lowell Weicker that was widely interpreted as a grope toward a new, centrist third party. Nothing came of the discussion, but it marked Bradley's disillusionment

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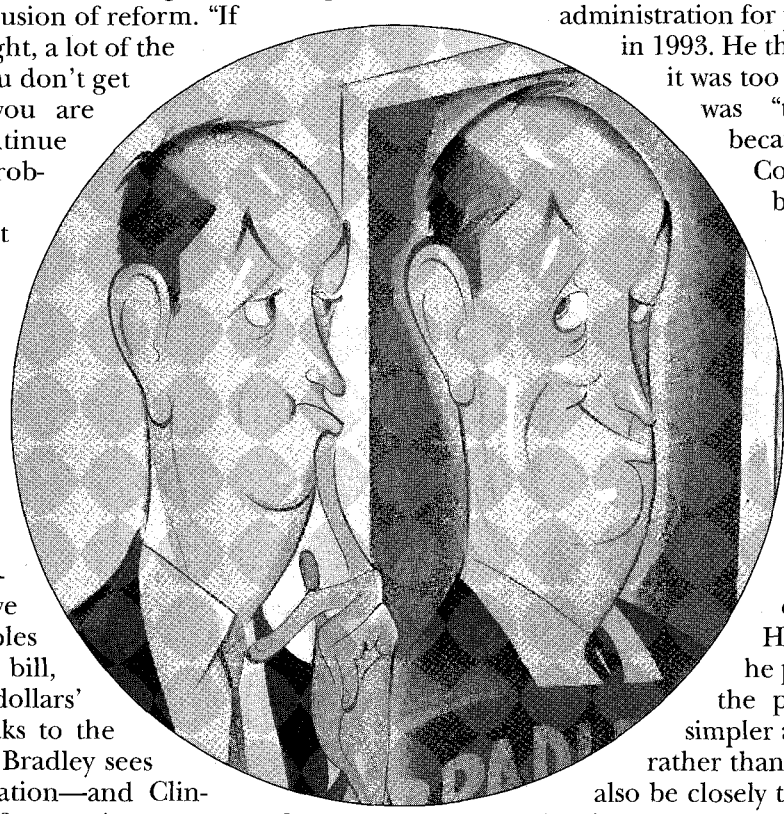
both with party politics and with the Clinton administration and foreshadowed his willingness to challenge Gore.

Bradley has not summed up his dissatisfaction with the Clinton administration in a single speech or statement, but his position can be gleaned from different speeches (particularly his address to the Virginia Democratic Party last month) and from what he says when asked to evaluate the administration. Bradley believes in what he calls "big reforms" and faults the Clinton administration for performing "rhetorical flourishes followed by tiny demonstration projects." Bradley thinks the approach, initiated by Clinton at Dick Morris's suggestion, of offering "bite-sized programs" can create an illusion of reform. "If you get the structure right, a lot of the problems go away. If you don't get the structure right, you are going to have to [continue to] fight smaller problems," he says.



Bradley thinks that the political system has become dysfunctional. The political parties, once popular organizations, have become fund-raising and lobbying tools. Money rules elections and shapes legislation. In his view, this is why Congress and the Clinton administration have abandoned the principles of the 1986 tax reform bill, restoring billions of dollars' worth of new tax breaks to the already-complex code. Bradley sees the Clinton administration—and Clinton's questionable 1996 campaign—as part of the problem rather than the solution, and he thinks Gore, whatever his true beliefs, is compromised by his association with the administration's fund-raising and is therefore politically vulnerable.

Bradley wants a ban on soft money, the overturning of *Buckley* v. *Valeo*, and the establishment of strict spending limits; if that fails, he favors public financing of congressional campaigns. Through campaign reform, he wants to remove the layer of moneymen and lobbyists between candidates and voters and between parties and voters. His model of the political party is a good-government version of the old machine organization. In his Virginia speech, he suggested that the Democratic Party revive its function as a social service agency. "Why not establish a party-mentoring group for children in public schools? Why not party basketball leagues at the Girls and Boys Clubs?" he asked.

Bradley also faults the administration for not using the current prosperity to address problems of poverty and economic insecurity that may become intractable during an economic downturn. "Here we are in a period of really strong economic growth, and there still are forty-four million people in America without any health insurance," he says at a New Hampshire citizens' forum. "I think there are still one in four children in poverty.... If we can't solve these problems with the economy where it is, when will we be able to solve this?" Bradley argues that the persistence of poverty and insecurity is a drain on American productivity and prosperity, but the heart of his appeal on these questions is moral, not economic.

Bradley's overall approach is clearest in how he deals with health care. He was not critical of the Clinton administration for proposing a "big reform" in 1993. He thinks it failed not because it was too ambitious but because it was "too complicated" and because it was badly sold to Congress. "When you do a big reform, you have to lay something out that is clearly for talking purposes and really listen to people," he says. But he also thinks the Clinton plan was defeated because the "insurance industry ran 'Harry and Louise' all across America" and because lobbyists with their PACs converged on Capitol Hill. Bradley's plan, which he promises to unveil before the primaries begin, will be simpler and framed as a proposal rather than as a final bill, and it will also be closely tied to the need for campaign finance reform.

Bradley has fairly sophisticated positions on international trade and finance, Social Security, and the environment, but they are not significantly different from those of the Clinton administration. (He goes even further than the administration in rejecting the privatization of Social Security, opposing the investment of any funds in the stock market for fear that they will be jeopardized by a downturn.) Bradley is highlighting campaign finance reform, tax reform, and universal health care not just because he believes they are high priorities but because those issues bring out most clearly where he differs from Clinton and Gore.

But there is, of course, more to a campaign than a set of positions and themes. To win the Democratic primary, Bradley has to run an extremely effective campaign against a rival who enjoys the advantage (as well as the disadvantage) of semi-incumbency—including the support of the party's most powerful interest groups—and will have $20 million to $30 million more

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to spend on TV ads in critical, big-state primaries. I traveled with Bradley for two days in New Hampshire to see how well he was putting his message across. I saw him at his best but also at his abysmal worst.

Most presidential candidates tell voters why they want to be president, what's wrong with their rivals, and what they plan to do if they are elected. On the first day I was with Bradley, he asked voters (and sometimes people who will not be voting in the New Hampshire primary) to tell him their stories, but he did not readily volunteer his own. He acted like a cultural anthropologist visiting Fiji rather than a politician rounding up primary votes.

He started off Sunday morning at an IHOP in Salem, New Hampshire, just across the Massachusetts border. He walked the aisles asking breakfast diners, many of whom were from Massachusetts—and therefore ineligible to vote in the primary—what was on their minds. In the parking lot outside, Bradley held a press conference. When a well-meaning but inexperienced television reporter from Manchester, with her cameras whirring, asked him, "What distinguishes you from the vice president?" Bradley showed his haughty side. "There are a number of things that will come out in the course of the campaign," he said. "Anything specific?" she asked. "Not today," he snapped.

After the stop at the children's museum in Londonderry, Bradley visited the Nashua Pastoral Care Center, which provides housing for single mothers threatened with homelessness. Just as at the museum, the ratio of reporters, photographers, and campaign staffers to real voters was about three to one. Bradley sat slumped on a couch in a small, crowded room, with three "clients" and a "graduate" of the center. He said to each of them, "Tell me your story." Then he asked a stock series of questions: "How did things go wrong?" "What was the single most important thing about the program?" "So what do you hope for?" and "What are your fears?" He occasionally interjected an "oh my" or "ah" or "that's great." After they finished telling their stories, he said to them, while motioning toward us reporters: "I am running for president. One of the things I am doing is letting them see the America I see. I am not simply here to be photographed but to let them hear your stories." His aides fanned out among us, offering interviews with the center's clients. (I passed. Unlike Bradley, I spent ten years living next to a center like this, and I know pretty well how they operate.)

Bradley's campaign style was supposed to reflect his spontaneous and genuine interest in other human beings, but it bore the mark of the social distance that separates him from ordinary America. There was something forced and artificial, even somewhat condescending, about his listening. His questions at the Nashua Pastoral Care Center seemed as scripted and mechanical as Clinton's or Reagan's tributes to American heroes during their State of the Union addresses. Bradley would have learned far more if he had engaged his audience rather than passively listening to them. And they might have learned something about him.

On the second day I spent with Bradley, he abandoned his metaphysical posture and revealed some of himself to New Hampshire voters. He held a noon press conference at a law office in Manchester to herald his endorsement by two prominent New Hampshire Democrats. In answering questions from the press and curious voters, Bradley discarded his slouch and acted like a normal candidate, towering at his full height over a lectern. Pledging not to take PAC contributions, he argued forcefully for campaign finance reform. "We live in a system where one person has one vote, and it is fundamentally unfair that people with a lot of money have more clout than that one vote," he said. "Money distorts the democratic process today, and it is important that a change be made, and the change begins with you."

Bradley's next stop was WMUR-TV's new studio, dubbed the "House that Steve Forbes built" for the $6 million that Forbes pumped into New Hampshire television during the 1996 primaries. Citizens Bank sponsors televised forums in which each of the Republican and Democratic candidates takes questions for a half hour from a moderator and a representative panel of citizens. Bradley exchanged his Sunday sports jacket for a rumpled, dark gray suit, but he still had his yellow Rockports on. The camera exaggerated their size, making him look like a member of the Ringling Bros. Circus. His aides, who were watching from another room, gasped when they saw the monitor, but Bradley remained charmingly, and characteristically, oblivious to his appearance. Bradley stumped for political reform and universal health care, but he also showed his considerable talents as a teacher as he explained why he thought Social Security should be taken off the budget and why *Buckley* v. *Valeo* was a bad ruling. He made an impression on the audience and on the Citizens Bank officials who were present. One bank official told me that Bradley is the first candidate he heard who "spoke from the heart" and did not "sound scripted." The setting showed what Bradley can do in smaller groups when he doesn't try to play Mr. Rogers or Margaret Mead.

After the session, I talked to Bradley one-on-one. I didn't have time to explore how his view of the world had changed since I had last interviewed him, but I quickly gathered that he hadn't lost his grasp of thorny economic questions. I asked him a long-winded question about whether he thought the present was more like the late '20s, when speculative excesses buoyed the price of stock, or the early 1900s, when steel and other stocks appeared overvalued but were not. He quickly boiled it down. "Are we in the bubble or the new paradigm?" he replied. "That's the open question." Then he insisted, probably rightly, that the question can't be answered yet.

I asked him how he thought he differed from Gore.

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He said that the most important differences were "life experience" and "leadership style." "I think, for example, in the life experience, I have been through long periods of my life where I didn't see the federal government at all. I did a job. You look at the federal budget a different way," he said. "And, then, in terms of the leadership style, we are precisely at a time where you have to lay out a big structure and a big interpretive pattern to understand international economics or technology or family or diversity, and I think there is a difference there."

When I commented that there were not striking differences between him and Gore on most issues, he replied curtly: "The differences in terms of issues will come out in the campaign. It's not the time for that." Bradley's strategic reluctance to tip his hand about his line of attack on Gore is understandable, but his emphasis on experience and leadership smacked of a political consultant's script. The contrasts he is making are largely unjustified or unfair but serve to convey deeper differences that are better left implicit.

For experience, Bradley could hardly rate as a Washington outsider. He was a senator from 1978 to 1996 and is now campaigning to return to Washington. But, by drawing this phony insider-outsider contrast with Gore, he subliminally evokes his prior celebrity as a basketball star and ties Gore to the image of a corrupt Washington establishment. As for bigthink leadership, Gore has been responsible for his share of micro-proposals—the latest being dialing "N11" to combat suburban sprawl—but he has also been the point man for the global warming treaty.

Fellow Democrats urged Bradley to run for president in 1988 and 1992, but he demurred, citing a list of four qualifications that a president must have but that he didn't yet possess. The irony, of course, is that he possessed more of them than any of the men who eventually ran for president and would probably have won the nomination, particularly in 1988, and perhaps even the presidency. But Bradley exhibited an excess of caution that his aides claim he has finally overcome. The question is whether, in running against Gore, he has exchanged caution and prudence for recklessness and folly.

Gore is clearly the favorite, but there is one scenario in which Bradley could give Gore a close race and maybe even win. Bradley probably can't win the Iowa Caucus, which depends heavily on organization and interest-group support—Bradley's support of free trade has cost him with the unions—but he could win New Hampshire. Buoyed by press attention, he would then be in a position to win New York and California, which take place in early March.

If he did that, he could challenge Gore to the finish even if he were to lose decisively in the South. The assumption is that the compressed primary schedule would work to Bradley's advantage because, after Bradley won New Hampshire, Gore would not have the time—as Walter Mondale did in 1984 after being defeated by Hart—to regroup and refocus his efforts. And, if Bradley wins a few primaries, he'll get enough free media to make up Gore's advantage in money.

At least the first part of this scenario is plausible. New Hampshire is perfect for Bradley. Labor unions are not an important factor. Independents can vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary. New Hampshire has a long history of upsetting front-runners. If Bradley's emphasis on campaign finance plays well anywhere, it would be in New Hampshire. And the New Hampshire style of politics fits Bradley better than Gore. Both men are wooden orators, though Gore is slightly better, and both can be charming, witty, and brilliant in intimate settings. But Bradley is capable of doing better than Gore in the town meetings and citizens' forums that are common in the New Hampshire primary. Bradley can at least appear genuine, while Gore seems scripted and stilted.

If Bradley does win New Hampshire, a host of factors could come into play. If the economy is still buoyant, Gore could benefit from his identification with Clinton. Yet he could still suffer from voters' inevitable disenchantment with the president. A good deal of Clinton's popularity has reflected the public's dislike of his adversaries, from Newt Gingrich to Ken Starr. Bradley's political stature and his celebrity as an athlete could also make it more difficult for Gore to dismiss Bradley than it was for Mondale to dismiss Hart in 1984 or Dole to dismiss Buchanan in 1996.

Bradley should have enough money to make a credible run—he has lined up the help of CEOs from Sara Lee, Starbucks, and Disney—but he himself has never run a presidential campaign before, and, as his first day in New Hampshire made abundantly clear, many of his campaign staffers are also new to presidential politics. They simply may not be prepared for what happens during and after the New Hampshire primary, when the pace of campaigning can shift overnight from a pickup game to March Madness. Bradley's championing of the poor and his call for campaign finance reform may not resonate outside of the northern good-government tier that stretches from New England over to Minnesota and then to the Pacific Northwest.

Whoever wins, however, the Democratic Party and the country will benefit from this contest between two candidates who are both qualified to be president. Certainly, if Gore gets the nomination, he won't be damaged politically by having been forced to develop a position on campaign finance or universal health care. Like any race, this one will have its share of ridiculous posturing and poll-driven pronouncements. But, more than any recent primary contest, it could be a genuine battle of ideas, and of ideas that are relevant to how America is governed in the next century. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

High School, Low Lives

I missed the press screenings of **Cruel Intentions** (Columbia) and caught up with it after it opened. This, in a wry way, was good luck: because in the theater, before the feature, I saw previews of four coming attractions, all of which dealt with teenagers in various comic and grave situations, all festooned with slam-bang sex. By the time that the teenage *Cruel Intentions* came on, I felt as if I had gone through an adolescent decompression chamber.

The feature film seemed to grow out of the previews as if it had been organically produced by the snippets that preceded it; except that the feature seemed too ambitious for what it could handle. The preview snippets were from films about high school, kinetically emphasizing all the aspects of high-school life that worry parents. But *Cruel Intentions* is an adult story played by high-schoolers. Every once in a while a major American city turns over the municipal government for one day to a high-school civics class. This film turns over an eighteenth-century French novel of steely moral cynicism to an American cast of high-school age. It's done as a present-day piece, but this is not the only reason that the atmosphere is spurious.

Not many people still believe that teenagers today are dewy-eyed, and most of us are aware that first sexual experiences in teenagers are often accompanied by a weary air of experience (often to cover up amazement). But neither of these facts equips this cast to capture the lofty 1782 atmosphere of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, especially the intellectual gamesmanship of aristocrats amused by dehumanized sex. I doubt that the filmmakers, Roger Kumble and others, believed that modern ultra-rich teenagers could carry the entire immoral weight of the novel: they just wanted to shear off Laclos's sexual shenanigans and slap them on kids today.

The previews and the feature were depressing. They confirmed the grip of teenagers on American filmmaking. We all know that some films of serious intent still get made—*Saving Private Ryan*, *Affliction*, *The Thin Red Line*, for recent instances—and we know that a wide streak of juvenilia has always run through filmmaking. But the difference between our times and previous ones is empowerment. Technologies have given added command to strata of society that were previously less empowered and that now, through TV and CD and MTV and other means, can swing golden cudgels. When *Titanic* soared to a billion dollars in global receipts principally because teenage girls drooled for Leonardo DiCaprio, I seemed to hear midnight telephones ringing in the homes of Hollywood biggies as they were summoned to breakfast meetings next day to reconsider studio plans. Adolescents have as much right as anyone to films of their choice, a right that has always been served; but now there's a sense that teenage fingers are gripping the film world's windpipe.

Cruel Intentions may not be the direct result of *Titanic*, but the Kumble picture follows in the steamship's wake.

Just to be just, let's look at a grown-up blunder—one made by talented people. **Analyze This** (Warner Bros.) has a quite funny premise. A Mafia don, subject to anxiety attacks, goes for treatment to a quiet Jewish psychologist. When the idea was first proposed at a story conference, the people sitting around the table must have slapped it in glee. But unfortunately the premise is where the funniness stopped. It's easy to think of a funny premise for a film. Just link two opposites. An Eskimo inherits a hotel in Florida; a prissy spinster touring Europe rents a room in what she does not know is a brothel. All right, then what?

The "then what" is the trouble with *Analyze This*. Thus the screenplay, written by Peter Tolan, Harold Ramis, and Kenneth Lonergan, is flabby. Ramis, who directed, did the same for *Groundhog Day*, where he licked the basic problem: how to *grow* from the premise. In this Mafia-and-shrink story, complications accrue, but they all seem padding, as if the writers knew they had to come up with development and were digging hard. (During some of the complications, we can almost hear them screaming, "What do you want from us? We're *trying*, aren't we?") But it ends up a one-joke picture, with feeble variations.

Billy Crystal, the shrink, is a funny man—he's the best Oscar-night host since Johnny Carson—and has sometimes made bricks out of straw, but there's not enough straw here. Robert De Niro is a refulgent talent, but that talent doesn't always extend to his choice of scripts. Remember *Marvin's Room*, *The Fan*, *Jackie Brown*. Here he gives us a

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Dreamlife of Angels. *Insight, intimacy, truth in this exploration of the lives of two twenty-year-old French women. (Reviewed 3/22/99)* **The Harmonists.** *The (basically) true story of a six-man singing group, half of them Jewish, who were permitted to perform for a year under the Nazis. Some sentiment, some grim comedy. (3/29/99)* **The Last Days.** *Documentary about five Hungarian survivors of the Holocaust. Much of it is new and moving, some of it is familiar yet moving. (3/8/99)* **Shakespeare in Love.** *A Tudor frolic, well frolicked. (1/4&11/99)*—**SK**

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well-prepared performance in search of a screenplay to employ it.

A cheerier note from Britain. **Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels** (Gramercy) is a gang-war comedy set in the East End of London, which, as even a visitor knows, is not just a different city, it's almost a different country. (I've met elderly East Enders who had never been to the West End and didn't care.) Guy Ritchie wrote and directed and electrified this picture from Moment One. This is Ritchie's first feature, after making commercials and MTVs, and he kicks up his heels at the chance to use his past free spirit in this grander enterprise. He showers us with breezy trickery—shots upside down, shots speeded up, freeze-frames where playing cards tossed in the air keep hanging there. We can't help enjoying the fact that he's so happy to be making a feature.

The plot has to do with two rival gangs of crooks, one much younger and more light-hearted than the other. A great sum of cash gets hijacked by one gang from the other, though, as only the hijacking gang knows, their headquarters literally adjoin. Much of the action is laugh-provoking, and even the plentiful violence is handled as comic by-play. The cast is revved up to sizzle, with Sting in a smallish role, and the thick cockney dialogue is more comprehensible than you might think. (The few bits of rhyming slang have subtitles.) The leading man's voice-over saves time and insures clarity.

An oddity. The filmmaking is as mod as possible, but the cockney verve seems timeless, as does the pragmatic morality. For atmospheric reasons, not plot similarities, I kept thinking of *The Beggar's Opera.*

Postscript. Just arrived: the sad news of Stanley Kubrick's death. Comment on his career must wait until the summer, when his final film will be released. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Artifact Museum

Broadway has not been a source of new ideas for decades, but only lately has it been turning into a museum. Even its self-celebrated musical comedies are now artifacts—refurbished old hits such as *Cabaret, Annie Get Your Gun, The Sound of Music,* and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown.* Visiting New York today is like taking a trip into a country where time has stopped. Isn't it amazing that the biggest Broadway hit of 1999 was also the biggest Broadway hit of 1949?

I refer, of course, to Arthur Miller's **Death of a Salesman.** In the fullness of my years, I have seen Willy Loman played by Lee J. Cobb, Gene Lockhart, Thomas Mitchell, Frederic March, Dustin Hoffman (stage and TV editions), Hal Holbrook (a touring production that never made it to New York), and maybe another half-dozen character actors whose performances I have forgotten. So do we really need yet another Broadway revival of a fifty-year-old anthology nugget? The answer is a resounding yes, if the revival is as powerfully acted as this one. The *Death of a Salesman* currently playing at the Eugene O'Neill Theater helps to remind us that the best museums are devoted to animating the past, rather than to preserving it in formaldehyde.

Imported from the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, where the play was first staged by its artistic director, Robert Falls, this version features Brian Dennehy and Elizabeth Franz (who also played Linda Loman opposite Hal Holbrook) in the leading roles. It has been designed by Mark Wendland and lit by Michael Philippi in a manner that almost erases the original Jo Mielziner setting from memory: for the transparent and ethereal but basically realistic landscape of Elia Kazan's production, it substitutes a series of backlit diaphanous panels that move along a treadmill to create a sense of abstract space.

It is true that in this version props and costumes are sometimes historically confused. Biff wears football equipment that seems to have been borrowed from the locker room of Red Grange, while Bernard carries a framed tennis racket that looks like something Helen Wills Moody might have wielded at Wimbledon. But authenticity aside, the production carries with it the sweet fragrance of the past, without resorting to such nostalgic reinforcement as Alec Wilder's flute music in the original *Salesman.*

Watching Dennehy lumber on-stage at the beginning of the play, carrying his two valises and mumbling about his trouble keeping the Studebaker on the road, made me realize with a start how much time had passed in the interim. Miller was in his thirties when he wrote the play; now he is in his eighties. Willy at sixty used to seem like an old man to me. Now I am forced to call this loser middle-aged. The passing of time has also changed the focus of the play. Once we argued a lot about whether *Salesman* was a true tragedy or an instance of dramatized sociology, about whether Willy was a tragic hero or, lacking a trace of self-recognition, simply a victim of social forces. We also used to question the consistency of Miller's notion that American success was a consequence of cheating and chicanery (Uncle Ben), when the play features a character (Bernard) who is lionized for arguing a case before the Supreme Court.

None of this seems to matter any more. (What seems more relevant is how Willy's "delusory" belief in a link between likability and success is being regularly confirmed in the national popularity contests that we call elections.) The political issues of the play—namely, the plight of the exploited common man in capitalist America—now seem infinitely less urgent than its emotional issues, which are rooted in the play's family relationships. Heartless employers such as Howard ("Pull yourself together, kid") no longer throw away older workers "like a piece of fruit"—union vigilance and statutes against ageism provide some protection against such abuses. So do such mechanisms as Social Security, employee benefits, annuity plans, Roths and Keoghs, and similar devices designed to help soften the economic problems of exploited workers. What have remained the same, though, are the family conflicts of these people, and to some extent their spiritual emptiness.

Granted that too much of Miller's plot hinges on Biff coming on Willy in Boston being unfaithful to Mom. Yet the play still has a wrenching power, much of it derived (despite occasional archaisms such as "Nobody dast blame this man") from the perfect pitch of the dialogue. Much of the play's power is also based on the sure-fire conventions of Yiddish theater. As if it were in a direct line from Second Avenue through Odets, *Death of a Salesman* climaxes with a rebellious son being reconciled with his estranged father. As played by Dennehy and Kevin Anderson, the moment when Willy discovers that Biff actually loves him still has the capacity to drench an audience in tears. (Compare Al Jolson being forgiven by his stern Orthodox father for having become a *teaterzinger* rather than a cantor.)

But the most compelling figure in

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Miller's family drama is now Linda Loman, a character who always seemed to me excessively saintly. As played by Franz, a half-smile masking her broken heart, she emerges no longer as patience on a monument, darning old stockings while her husband hands out new ones to his tootsies. She has become a pillar of outraged ferocity and tremendous emotional strength, reinforcing Willy in the same way that Happy reinforces Biff, while sensing that something awful and unavoidable is on the way.

Dennehy is not the most convincing Willy in history. He is a little too mannered, a little too lacking in genuine desperation, a little too conscious of having a graceful soul in a clumsy body, to match the great ones. (Nobody, not even Cobb, equaled the underestimated Gene Lockhart.) But although Dennehy occasionally overuses certain mannerisms, particularly the way his hand plays vacantly around his mouth, he is certainly giving the performance of his career. And Robert Falls has orchestrated a production that penetrates the heart and satisfies the soul, and even provides a little nourishment for the mind.

Owing partly to this play, Arthur Miller remains one of the towering figures of postwar American drama, alongside Tennessee Williams. But whereas Miller has his masterpiece sitting on a Broadway stage, Williams is currently being represented by a crude piece of juvenilia that he had the good sense to stow away in a trunk, after it was rejected by the Group Theater. The play remained lost among his papers until Vanessa Redgrave unearthed it for productions at the Royal National Theatre and the Alley Theatre. This was certainly a service, though considering how overpraised the work has been by so many critics, young people unfamiliar with Williams's genius might very well think that **Not About Nightingales** is typical of his writing. Imagine if they were forced to judge Miller purely on the basis of his clumsy early play *The Man Who Had All the Luck.*

I am generally in favor of producing anything by a gifted playwright, regardless of his posthumous instructions. O'Neill's unfinished *More Stately Mansions* was a pretty damaged work, but it had the advantage of a production by Ivo Van Hove that almost made it look like a work of genius. *Not About Nightingales,* currently playing at Circle in the Square, certainly has historical interest for those interested in Williams; but to my battered mind, this is a tiresome three-hour-long exercise in prison melodramatics. And it is hardly redeemed by Trevor Nunn's hyperactive production.

Writing partly under the influence of O'Neill's sea plays, Williams had also been watching a lot of Big House movies when he conceived *Not About Nightingales* in 1938, at the age of 27. It contains just about every stereotype to be found in the genre: the brutal and lustful warden, the self-educated con with a poetic soul, the hardened killer who leads the breakout or the hunger strike, the guy who goes "stir bugs" from pressure, the Bible-reading black prisoner, the sympathetic blonde secretary, the hooker from across the bay, the compassionate prison chaplain—characters formerly played (in that order) by Jack Holt, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Jimmy Cagney or Humphrey Bogart, Paul Guilfoyle, Paul Robeson, Gloria Grahame, Glenda Farrell, and Pat O'Brien. Lenny Bruce satirized this kind of prison melodrama mercilessly in a 1950s sketch about a big breakout (where the lead gorilla keeps shouting "Wadda wadda wadda Warden"), in the course of which a Negro con sings spirituals about "gwine up to heaven" (where he hopes to learn what a "gwine" is), a kindly guard warns the prisoners "not to scuff your good time," and Kicky the "nafka" hospital attendant negotiates an end to the rebellion in exchange for a gay bar in the west wing.

Regrettably, there is not a hint of such humor in *Not About Nightingales.* The play is as solemn as a post. Loosely based on an actual incident in the Philadelphia County prison, it was written when Williams's social conscience was at its most active (vestiges remain of *The Glass Menagerie*); and also, I fear, at its most facile. Bert "Boss" Whalen (played by Colin Redgrave) runs his "model institution" with an iron hand, stealing money from the prison budget by feeding his prisoners an endless diet of spaghetti and tainted meatballs. When Prison Block C goes on a hunger strike in protest, he throws the men into a boiler room called "Klondike," turning up the heat to 150 degrees and parboiling a few inmates in the process. The remaining prisoners stage a revolt, kill the warden and some guards, and are finally mowed down by the state police.

In a subplot, Canary Jim Allison (Finbar Lynch) is a self-educated trustee who, having read some Keats, tries to write his own poetry. Jim falls in love with a demure but penurious secretary named Eva Crane (Sherri Parker Lee) who shares his love of literature—his recitation of "Ode to a Nightingale" provides the only bearable language in the play. Unlike those of Keats, however, Jim's experiences are not such that he can write any longer "about nightingales." For example, Jim and Eva try to make love in the prison yard, only to be apprehended by the guards and delivered to Boss Whalen, who, viper that he is, covets the wench for himself. In the tradition of Puccini's Scarpia, the warden promises this five-and-dime Tosca the freedom of her lover if she will yield to his lust. But just as he is about to consummate his evil cravings, and just as Jim is about to be cooked with the others in Klondike, Butch O'Fallon (James Black), the toughest guy in the joint, wrests away a guard's gun and starts the rebellion that leads to the warden's death.

If Williams was watching too many prison movies when he wrote this play, Trevor Nunn was watching too many Living Theatre documentaries when he staged it. The metallic set by Richard Hoover, where the jail cells seem to multiply indefinitely in the gloom, is quite splendid, but it looks suspiciously like Julian Beck's design for *Frankenstein* (The prison offices, where everything, including the American flag, is colored in shades of gray, seem to have been influenced by the set for *Chicago.*) Moreover, the endless clatter of the sound design, a compound of sirens blaring, whistles shrieking, truncheons banging, and cons stamping on the metal floor, produces the kind of pain once shared by actors and audiences alike in the Living Theatre production of Kenneth H. Brown's *The Brig.* There it provided a sense of powerful immediacy. Here it amounts to little more than acoustical pollution.

The difference is in the acting. While Nunn has choreographed this production within an inch of its life, he has totally failed to invest the acting with a hint of truth. The visual design is full of authentic detail, right down to the style in which Sherri Parker Lee's blonde hair has been bobbed; but almost all the performances slide along the surface of the characters without ever making an effort at penetrating their skins. Redgrave's gimlet-eyed Boss Whalen never rises above the stereotype of the stiff-necked, cigar-smoking, whiskey-drinking evil menace (he even talks out of the side of his mouth), and James Black's "ah you dirty rat" performance borrows Cagney's easy bravado without Cagney's compressed energy. Finbar Lynch and Sherri Parker Lee as the two lovers have a degree of romantic yearning in their love scenes, but neither is given the opportunity to explore his or her part with any degree of depth. The actors are almost all sacrifices to Nunn's choreographic skills and empty scenic display. Remind you a little of *Cats* and *Les Miz*?

We should consider ourselves lucky that Harold Clurman had the good sense to reject *Not About Nightingales.* Otherwise, Williams might have been snapped up by Hollywood and encouraged to write gangster movies for Edward G. Robinson. But if the newly produced *Not About Nightingales* looks more like

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a museum piece today than the often-performed *Death of a Salesman*, we must, nevertheless, welcome the Williams play with the same hospitality, if not the same enthusiasm, as Miller's. American drama's two leading playwrights should always be represented on Broadway. Wouldn't it be nice if just once in a season some younger playwright might find representation there as well? •

Is literary greatness still possible?

The Shabby and the Sublime

By Adam Zagajewski

I.

Whenever we speak of anything more general than, say, the view from our own window (a cherry branch, and behind it the late afternoon's cloudy sky), we risk being charged with arbitrariness. You might say it that way, the critic scoffs, but then again it could be put quite differently. Pandemonium prevails in the realm of general propositions. A poet is especially sensitive to the charge of arbitrariness. Poetry, after all, involves precision and concreteness. In poetry, words are not verified, in the manner of Carnap, through empirical, quantifiable observations; they are verified through existential preparedness, through experience, through one's own life, through reflection and moments of illumination. But they *are* verified. They do not appear randomly. Only provincial physics teachers who down a few beers every night could conceive of poetry as the realm of absolute license.

But when someone who works alone in the concrete domain of poetry ventures into the domain of general propositions about literature—like a carpenter who has been asked to give a talk on the problems of forest administration—he must take a deep breath and get it over with quickly, and unflinchingly assert that, in his opinion, writing and thinking in recent years seems meager, gray, thin, anemic. More specifically, the output of recent years—I will take poetry as my example, since that is what I follow most closely—is marked by a disproportion between the high style and the low, between powerful expressions of the inner life and the ceaseless chatter of self-satisfied craftsmen. A kind of appeasement is being practiced in the literary world, a general policy of evasions and concessions regarding the literary vocation; and one of the chief symptoms of this failing is the decline of high style, and the overwhelming predominance of a low style, tepid, ironic, conversational.

I am not speaking as a conservative. I do not advocate a return to the Middle Ages, or a return to anything. Also I do not bemoan a dearth of talent, since there is no shortage of talented writers. I want only to describe the situation as I see it, running the risk at every moment of alienating somebody, socialists or sportsmen, stamp collectors or supporters of education and better housing. How did this all get started? Do we know?

At times we may catch sight of how things used to be before the mutation downward of European literature. In *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves's extraordinary autobiography, we find the following description of a meeting with Siegfried Sassoon:

> Siegfried Sassoon had, at the time, published only a few privately-printed pastoral pieces of eighteen-ninetyish flavor.... We went to the cake shop and ate cream buns. At this time I was getting my first book of poems, *Over the Brazier*, ready for the press; I had one or two drafts in my pocket-book and showed them to Siegfried. He frowned and said that war should not be written about in such a realistic way. In return he showed me some of his own poems. One of them began:
>
> *Return to greet me, colors that were my joy,*
> *Not in the woeful crimson of men slain....*
>
> Siegfried had not yet been in the trenches. I told him, in my old soldier manner, that he would soon change his style.

The trenches of the First World War led to what was probably an inevitable change of style. They thrust writers in the direction of an outraged realism. Graves's generation had a quarrel with the silver-tongued orators of the Victorian era, with impassioned elocutionists, with abusers of high-flown speech such as D'Annunzio. The splendid Montale constructed his poetics precisely against the grandiloquence of poets such as D'Annunzio. Above all, the poets of Graves's generation despised the hysterical style of journalists and generals. After his return to England from the front, Graves recalls, it was months before he could bear the patriotic syntax of the publicists. Disgustedly he quotes a letter written by a "little mother" intended to persuade other British mothers that they should rejoice in their sons' valiant deaths. Having experienced the horror of war, the rats in the trenches, the "no man's land" where unburied German and English corpses lay rotting, Graves was now confronted, and revolted, by the pronouncements of British chauvinism. During a war, generals—and their wives—employ the high style; and it enters naturally into the service of propaganda.

In the trenches of the First World War, and more unimaginably in the concentration camps of the Second World War, people saw things that nobody should see. It is probably impossible to create an art that could answer to the terror of those extreme experiences in a trustworthy and consistent way, that would "reach the heights" of the lowest depths in modern history. These radical experiences lead in the end to a rejection of Mozart's sonatas and Keats's poems. Someone will always turn up to speak for the horror and insist that literature is only literature and music is only music; and that person, as harrowed as Job (or maybe just a precocious student at a prestigious university) will be right. It is only literature, it is only music. And yet we don't have anything better.

The young Tadeusz Rozewicz, a poet who came not from the camps but from the forests that hid the partisans of World War II, effected something like an about-face in Polish poetry. He stripped it of its elaborate syntax, its velvety similes and its baroque accumulation of tropes, which he replaced with a radical starkness of expression. To be sure, such a simplification of style, which opened new vistas in art, was brought about by a multitude of factors. The pressure of modernity made itself felt in all forms of art, not just in poetry. The onslaught of social criticism, arising from education coupled with what Ortega y Gasset called the "revolt of the masses," and combined with the disillusionment of the romantic poet who had failed to persuade the

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masses to his vision, imbued poetry with its own sardonic tone. MacNeice once remarked that Auden managed to "put the soul across in telegrams." Auden and a few others were able to pull this off, but there was no dearth of poets who were almost fatally paralyzed by these stark means of expression; their souls became telegraph forms.

The trouble with great simplicity—and everyone who seeks truth and beauty has dreamed of it—is that it achieves its startling effect only by contrast with complex forms, and the result is never lasting. The moment of transformation, the instant of contrast, passes quickly. It is like a surgical procedure, which is not supposed to last long—unless you forget about the patient. Rozewicz remains an outstanding poet, but today he achieves more rarely the almost supernatural simplicity of his early verse. Paradoxically, the purging of aesthetics under the influence of horror, the simplification of art by shock, leads in the long run to an aesthetics and an art that are incapable of rendering the horror and the shock. It is worth noting that neither Czeslaw Milosz, who survived the Nazi nightmare, nor Osip Mandelstam, who did not survive the Stalinist nightmare, ever fell prey to the lure of a false simplicity.

I will give another example. A few years ago Tzvetan Todorov, with whom I often agree and occasionally argue, published a book called *Eloge du quotidien*, or *In Praise of the Quotidian*, a discussion of certain pictures from the golden age of Dutch painting. Todorov rightly admires the Dutch masters of the seventeenth century, about whom we may say (following Neruda), that thanks to them "the world's reality will not go unnoticed." Here is the world's reality, in this poetry of dim interiors, in these still lifes, *natures mortes*, disclosing the delicate being of things, paintings in which onions and leeks achieve the dignity of royal silk, portraits of men and women who were neither kings nor princes, but who merited nonetheless a depiction full of precision and tenderness. How can we comprehend the sensitivity of these painters, we who fear regularly that reality will melt beneath our fingers, for whom even the movies, unlike the vibrating electrons of television, seem somehow pleasantly old-fashioned, since they can at least sometimes show us people and things in their absolute, opaque presence?

But the aims of Todorov's elegant essay extend beyond the philosophical treatment of art history. He has what we would call an agenda. He seeks to defend a norm. He wishes to establish a sphere of life—and a corresponding sphere of art—from which certain elements of life and art may legitimately be excluded. Todorov's paean to genre painting, to dailiness, to ordinariness, is a program for life and art: an anti-metaphysical program. It confers a special ontological status upon the quotidian. We must love and adore the quotidian, so that we will no longer seek refuge in dreams and fantasies, in utopia and nostalgia. It summons us to live in the present moment, and in this perfect presentness, this perfect restraint, to root ourselves in reality.

But at what cost? Here is Todorov:

> The genre painter is not satisfied only to renounce history; he makes a choice, and a highly restrictive choice, among all the actions that make up the tissue of human life. He renounces the representation of everything that exceeds the ordinary, and remains inaccessible to the majority of mortals. There is no place here for heroes and saints.

Todorov, too, is advocating a great renunciation. Yet I resist this kind of pruning, this reduction of reality, this contraction of life—and art!—to a narrow zone that holds no place for heroes and saints. It's not that I wish to propagate heroics or hagiographies; I have something else in mind. I believe that, at the level of aesthetics, the contact with the sublime gives us the equivalent of "heroes" and "saints." This contact is never unadulterated—we have such thick skins that we probably could not abide an epic poem that functioned only as a conduit to the sublime, that did not also amuse and puzzle us. But still it remains indispensable for art. How little divides us from Longinus, whose work reminds us that the sublime is not a formal feature of a work and cannot be defined by way of rhetorical categories—that the sublime is instead "a spark that leaps from the soul of the writer to the soul of his reader."

Has that really changed? Don't we still wait greedily for that spark? Surely we do not go to poetry for sarcasm or irony, for learned dialectics or clever jokes. These worthy qualities and forms perform splendidly in their rightful place—in an essay, a scholarly tract, a broadside in an opposition newspaper. In poetry, however, we seek the vision, the flame that accompanies spiritual revelation. We expect poetry from poetry.

Todorov's worship of the ordinary rends the rich fabric of reality, the cloth that we received whole from previous generations and that we are obliged to pass on undamaged to generations yet to come. It is a construction of human

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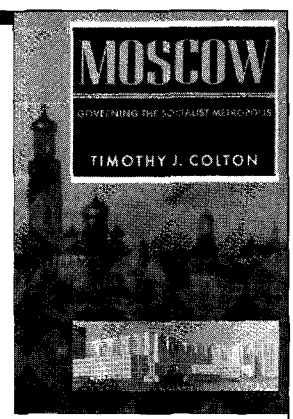

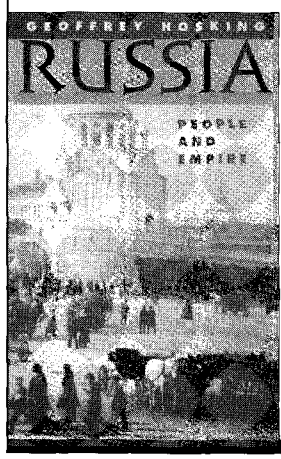

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experience that holds room for heroism and saintliness, for madness, tragedy, and reason—as well as for laughter, of course, and also for the quotidian, since it is true that the quotidian is beautiful. But it is beautiful not least because we sense in it the quiet quivering of potential events, of enigmatic, heroic, exceptional events.

The quotidian is like the surface of a peaceful, low-lying river, where delicate currents and gentle eddies are sketched, auguring rushes and floods that may or may not come to pass. The mute lightning bolts in the sky do not trouble us for now, they are omens of distant storms; but those storms will reach us one day. A notion of the quotidian that omits all possibility of heroism and saintliness—the shiver of a tragedy still distant—is flat and monotonous. Moreover, it is not true to life, and therefore it cannot form the ontological basis for a persuasive aesthetics. I am not in thrall, I hope, to what the Polish critic Karol Irzykowski called "the highbrow mania for tragedy"; but I insist that a complete sundering of the sublime must lead to a world of chess-playing computers, not living, mortal humans.

Todorov concludes a section of his essay with a description of a painting by Pieter de Hooch called *Mother and Children*, which hangs in Berlin. In the picture's background, we see a girl gazing at the world. "The girl is not looking at anything," Todorov writes, "her eyes are turned toward the emptiness outside, smitten by a spell that has stolen her away from the real world. The whole of life, the infinity of the universe, drives her on. She regards the light."

In this passage, one of my favorites in Todorov's beautiful book, we glimpse a way to revise the book's narrow program. It is precisely because the world that unfolds before the chubby little girl is boundless and mysterious—the painting just hints at "the world," as the northern daylight invades the cozy bourgeois interior through a half-opened door—that it must encompass the known *and* the unknown. Neither heroism nor saintliness can be axiomatically excluded, any more than one can remove the ultraviolet rays from daylight or expel the dead from the earth.

Yet such a diminishment is just what Todorov seeks: he wants to purify the human world, to shrink it. In his "praise of the quotidian," one senses a strong affinity with the mood of our unheroic era. The majority these days votes overwhelmingly in favor of the ordinary over the extraordinary. Surely it is the duty of an intellectual to resist this complacency, to consider the ideals and the experiences that encroach upon the horizon of the many, to regard the world without yielding to the spirit of the age. "Philosophy is the epoch's judge, but things go ill when it becomes the epoch's mouthpiece," Rudolf Pannwitz observed, as Hofmannsthal reports in his astonishing *Book of Friends*.

II.

The sublime must be understood differently these days, of course. The concept must be stripped of its neoclassical pomp, its Alpine stage-set excess, its theatrical overkill. The sublime today is chiefly a perception of the world's mysteries, a metaphysical shudder, an astonishment, an illumination, a sense of proximity to what cannot be put into words.

I mentioned madness among the elements that comprise that great reality of which we are the trustees, owing to the very significant accident of our birth. The marvelous Italian essayist Nicola Chiaromonte—a political emigré and antifascist, who died in Rome in 1972—wrote in an essay on Shakespeare:

> But in the world today madness has been eliminated for reasons of dogma: in our world only the most rigorous rationalism is given voice, and thus absurdity erupts on every front, and the claims of human madness, which insists on its due share, turn into bitter rebellion and a passion for destruction.

But our great reality obviously contains many other elements, too. They include not only darkness, tragedy, and madness, but also joy.

Not long ago I was rereading the essays of Jerzy Stempowski, an important Polish essayist who spent the second half of his life as a humble émigré in Switzerland, in Berne, where he died in 1969. And I came upon a surprising quotation from Maupassant—I say surprising, because you do not expect metaphysical gifts from naturalists. Its force struck me:

> From time to time I experience strange, intense, short-lived visions of beauty, an unfamiliar, elusive, barely perceptible beauty that surfaces in certain words or landscapes, certain colorations of the world, certain moments.... I'm not able to describe or communicate it to others, I can't express it or portray it. I save them for myself.... I have no other reason for continuing, no other cause for keeping on....

"Strange, intense, short-lived visions of beauty": how could we live without them? "I can't describe it," Maupassant says. And we discover in his account something very familiar that is also very difficult to convey. In such moments one experiences something incomprehensible and piercing, something extravagant and absolutely fundamental.

Origen thought that those who have been fully initiated into a religion's substance come to live in a spirit of eternal joy, an unending holiday. Only novices, he said, require the labored cheerleading of official church holidays. It is very clear that we who live today are not among the initiates: our holidays last only moments. And these ephemeral revelations of beauty are coupled in some strange way with moments of great sorrow, of overwhelming grief. Yet neither one nor the other is simply a personal whim, a mere mood swing; both the joy and the sorrow correspond to something in reality itself.

The mixture of impermanence and permanence, of what vanishes and what remains, is still another ingredient of our reality—that is, if we do not choose to think like reductionists. A workman's shovel may suddenly uncover a pocket-mirror of gold flashing among the dull, rough, unpolished lodes. Mortal and immortal moments likewise mingle in the abundance of our everyday existence. I suppose that there are far more of the former than the latter, but who knows? Has anyone counted?

But are we still able to write like Hölderlin, like Norwid, like Yeats, like Rilke, like Mandelstam, like Milosz, in a way that directs us to the world's wholeness, to the world that holds divinity and pain, joy and despair—and not merely like a professional who has mastered one subject perfectly and is interested in only one thing, be it language, politics, or acacia blossoms? And what should the high style be today? Almost certainly not hieratic utterances, in the manner of Claudel or Saint-John Perse. They are wonderful poets, but they lack a sense of humor; and a high style unaccompanied by a sense of humor—a sense of humor brimming with forbearance for our cruel, comic, and imperfect world—would become a chilly mausoleum. It would be like those quarries outside Carrara in Tuscany, from which the marble has been stripped, leaving only whiteness.

The high style grows from a ceaseless dialogue between two spheres, the spiritual realm whose guardians and creators are the dead (like Virgil in the *Divine Comedy*) and the domain of eternal *praesens*, our single precious moment, the pocket of time in which we have chanced to live. The high style mediates between the spirits of the past and the stopgaps of the present; between Virgil and the young people in their Walkmen rollerblading along Europe's slick side-

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walks; between poor, lonely Hölderlin and tipsy German tourists whooping it up along the narrow streets of Lucca; between the vertical and the horizontal.

The problem is that the high style is not really a "middleman" by nature, like Hermes in ancient Greece or Thomas Mann in the twentieth century. The high style arises as a response to final things. It is a reaction to mystery, to what is loftiest. But how does one mediate between what is high and what is flat? Surely the outcome of such a negotiation can only be a mathematical mean, a kind of measured leveling.

No, this "mediation" must be very subtle. There can be no talk of some happy medium between the great and small. The rigorous mediation that I have in mind involves instead a certain discomfort with contemporary society; it requires the humor and the irony that keep one from slipping into scorn. The contemporary writer has his feet caught in the rather absurd and comfortable little world of consumer society. And not just his feet: he is stuck in this world up to his knees, even up to his waist. He has been infected by the ludicrous passions of this frantically materialist universe.

At the same time, though, thanks not only to his reading, but also to his moments of solitude, and to experiences of the kind that Freud called "oceanic," the writer occasionally gains access to more serious realms of being. So perhaps the high style to which we may aspire is not about mediation so much as about a certain kind of metaphysical modesty, about humor, about the quality of our attention, about learning to open up to the beautiful and the sublime. Nothing reactionary or ridiculous is required to accomplish this; one need not drape oneself in ancient tunics like Stefan George and his circle of acolytes who, engulfed by the vulgarity of Wilhelmine Germany, performed Hellenic plays on the rooftops of apartment buildings. I stress the significance of humor for a high style, because we must also understand that we will never completely succeed in tidying the world, even if the high style typically aspires to a highly ordered reality. We continue to desire the high style, we continue to require its presence—but we can no longer continue to believe that we will complete our exhaustive inventory of the cosmos.

Strong in reading, thought, and experience, but weak in practice; mired in modernity like Seamus Heaney's mummies dredged up from ancient bogs; weak, too, like all modern men, in the mentality besieged by the theorists, the mentality of a "man without qualities": the writer in search of "high style" does not cease to be an "everyman." He is prey to all the temptations of modern life. He surrenders occasionally to the easy pleasures of mindless television and American movies. He knows the dreariness of highways and the oppressiveness of vacationing crowds. He is stronger than his fellow citizens only in his unflagging drive to seek out something higher, in his recollection of the sublime, which he refuses to write off as modernity's loss.

III.

Anyway, we are not in any danger of creating a high style that would arise chiefly or exclusively from a distaste for modernity. It was precisely such a distaste for modernity that defined and limited the rhetorical choices of the great and less great writers of the not-so-distant past. This misadventure befell the generation of our grandfathers (Ernst Jünger, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, André Malraux, Ernest Hemingway, Gottfried Benn, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Henry de Montherlant, Bertolt Brecht, and most illustriously Yeats and Eliot). A generation of "violent writers" was repelled by the torpid, horizontal world of modern democracy, by a modern society governed not by kingly flourishes but by the shocks of the stock market and the tallies of parliament.

As a consequence of this repulsion, they performed and promoted bold actions and valiant deeds. They were knights, worshippers of *corrida*, warriors, noblemen, seducers, revolutionaries, nationalists, commissars. The deed—military, erotic, political, aristocratic—was a metaphor, a pretext for high style, a rhetoric of ardent action whose goal was to throw off the modern world and to recast it in a purer, nobler alloy (though no one knew precisely what this better metal should be); and it made no difference whether this better substance came from the left or the right, so long as it was radical. Recent European memory has been imprinted with the notion that high style must always be an instrument of reaction, a hammer smashed against modernity.

It is a misguided notion. And we, who as children played gleefully and out of necessity among the ruins that resulted from the deeds of our dauntless, eloquent forebears, we are skeptical of that grand rhetoric, that version of high style, that knowing air. We also realize that modernity cannot be fought (you will not win), even if it needs to be chided and

What We Owe to Each Other

T.M. SCANLON

"Scanlon's discussions are deep and honest, and they illuminate many key concepts of moral philosophy: well-being, trust, friendship, loyalty, promises."
—Simon Blackburn, *New York Times Book Review*

How do we judge whether an action is morally right or wrong? If an action is wrong, what reason does that give us not to do it? Why should we give such reasons priority over our other concerns and values? In this book, T. M. Scanlon offers new answers to these questions, as they apply to the central part of morality that concerns what we owe to each other. According to Scanlon's contractualist view, thinking about right and wrong is thinking about what we do in terms that could be justified to others and that they could not reasonably reject.

Belknap Press • $35.00 cloth
Agnes Jacob, *La Cour Saleya*, 1997

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castigated on occasion, even if one of its less intelligent faces repels us. Modernity must instead be improved, expanded, enhanced, enriched; we must speak to it. Modernity resides within us; it is too late to attack it from the sidelines. We do not live on its sidelines.

I have often wondered whether the marked composure of the present generation of writers, the attitude of renunciation or even resignation that one detects in writers who no longer wish to be knights or officers whose faces, etched in scars, draw soldiers into battle, or ruthless revolutionaries with exotic *noms de guerre*, stems from a deliberate choice, from the conscious acceptance of an inner sensitivity, or whether it is also a predictable reaction to a tiring excess of noisy rhetoric, a simple desire for change. Several years ago the French minister of foreign affairs ironically chastised the French intellectuals who had violently attacked the sluggish European policy in Bosnia for not actually going to Bosnia to fight the aggressor as Malraux, Simone Weil, and so many others had done during the Spanish Civil War. He failed to consider the change of generations, the altered attitudes. Those who cherish the dialogical principle and the murmur of laptop computers are not likely to take up arms on the battlefield.

Or, to put it differently: do we prefer Vermeer to Rubens because we have carefully compared the value of contemplation to the value of radical action? Or are we governed simply by the prevailing mood, by what other people think? Is our moderation just a literary version of the common exhaustion? Is it wisdom that guides us in this new acceptance of limits, or conformism? If it is the latter, then the future of literature (and other futures) must be viewed pessimistically.

High style need not any longer stem from a dislike of modernity; but low style—ironic, colloquial, flat, small, minimal—may arise precisely from *ressentiment*, from a rejection of our silver-tongued forebears. Certainly those who read German writers have received the impression more than once that there exists to this day a prohibition on "sublimity" and "metaphysics" within German literature, as if everything higher, bolder, and unironically philosophical must be linked to a pernicious past and therefore resisted, as if the only alternative to tyranny is irony.

Thus the contemporary writer stumbles upon a problem basic to any artistic creation. Do we concede, in democracy's sober spirit, that we make our pronouncements in an empty room and that we draw exclusively upon our selves, our own spiritual lives, our own mentality, as we confess our venal sins and our minor revelations; or, as antiquity and the Middle Ages believed, and as the Romantics still hoped to believe, are we also subject to the more or less visible authority of a truth residing somewhere outside our own skulls? It is a difficult question. Certainly nobody would wish to relinquish the freedom that we achieved through the European revolts against churchly authority. In acknowledging the invisible authority of a truth beyond our selves, wouldn't we be squandering three hundred years of hard-won emancipation, the emancipation of citizens, of individuals, of men and women?

Anyway, we can neither discard the Enlightenment nor erase it from our history. I have already mentioned the essayist Jerzy Stempowski. In his book *Terre bernoise*, he writes about the trees of central Switzerland. He comments that, in the eighteenth century, lindens, which are trees consecrated to love and Venus, began to be planted at the spot where the local gallows had stood in almost every village. Anyone who has longed in a fit of rage to expunge the Enlightenment from our past would do well to remember those lindens, those lovely trees with the intoxicating scent that took the place of the dry wood of death not so long ago. Those trees would almost certainly not be there, if it were not for the overly rational eighteenth century and its wigs.

There can be no question of a "return" to some rigorously ordered "medieval" transcendence. Eliot's late directives advising poets to subject themselves to an impersonal discipline and to enroll in the ranks of a higher spiritual order seem pedantic; they reek of the church vestibule. And yet intuition, the power of which artists often speak, the power which permits the poet to deliver a poem's most telling words and the composer to deliver a sonata's most crucial notes, still deserves our best attention. Maybe we are not altogether alone in our empty room, in our workshop. If so many writers love solitude, it may be because they are not really all that lonely. There really is a higher voice that sometimes speaks. We catch it in the moments of our greatest concentration. Even if this voice speaks only once, even if it makes itself heard only after long years of waiting, it changes everything. For it signifies that the freedom that we cherish, the freedom that we seek, is not our only treasure. For the voice that we sometimes hear does not deprive us of our liberty. It demonstrates only that this liberty has its limits, that emancipation can take us only so far.

For this reason, I am stubbornly prepared to defend the notion of "inspiration," the notion that Valéry, that great professor of poetry, treated so contemptuously. Inspiration does not absolve anyone from exacting labor and harsh discipline; but inspiration—which differs for every artist and assumes new guises every time—is what guides us toward the voice. Inspiration is short-lived, of course. Yet its passing presence is significant, for it cleanses something in us, it opens us to that voice which we understand so poorly, but whose absence would leave us little wiser than any of the other mammals.

IV.

The English language has a very useful word, the word "cant," meaning humbug, high-flown lying, rhetoric. I think that everyone who speaks of high style today must bear in mind the countless rhetorical possibilities for its abuse, the new variants of cant that range from odes to Stalin and other tyrants to the thousands of wretched amateur verses singing the praises of flowers or naïvely lauding a naïve God. We will not rid ourselves of skepticism toward facile pathos so easily. Every era needs its own diction; anyone who praises high style by means of anachronistic, Symbolist syntax—or Victorian syntax, in the Anglo-American context—courts ridicule. We have also learned to marvel at details, at the concrete; and high diction in our day must preserve this secular empirical revelation, and not seek refuge in lofty clichés.

A passage in Aleksander Wat's memoirs comes to mind. As a young poet, he was much taken with Dadaism. Linguistic experimentation, and the playful criticism of language as such, enthralled him. But then Wat experienced a change of heart. It happened in the Lubyanka prison in Moscow (a prison from which very few emerged alive, and they were packed off to Siberia). There he understood that the language entrusted to a poet is extraordinarily precious and fragile, and in grave peril. The prison taught the poet that his task is to nurture language, not to mock it.

Wat's prison anecdote, so well known to Polish readers and critics, has a symbolic significance. It points to a watershed between two currents in twentieth-century poetry. The first of these currents is critical, avant-garde, analytic, and suspicious. The second, which draws far fewer followers, is more constructive than destructive, more ecstatic than sardonic. It seeks out what is hidden. The

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Lubyanka must have been the best possible place for such a reflection.

Even if they were lucky enough to escape Lubyanka, the poets of Central Europe knew very well about the existence of these two currents, and they understood Wat's perception perfectly. Not all of them drew radical conclusions from Wat's change of heart, obviously. But one poet who would surely have agreed with Wat was Zbigniew Herbert.

One day he showed up at our high school in Gliwice. Our high school was not exactly a hotbed of poetry, to put it mildly. All our time was taken up with parties, first dates, and bike rides, with Elvis Presley, Chubby Checkers, and Little Richard. If the school's more ambitious students (I will admit to being one of them) read anything more serious, our taste was dictated by current fashion. We read the theater of the absurd, and we adored bleak writing. The pitiless Kafka, with his gaunt, malnourished face, was our god.

Our own country's writers did not especially interest us; we were snobs. (Small countries often rebuff their own writers.) When he showed up at our school, though, Herbert was already a famous poet, even if he was better known among the cognoscenti in Warsaw and Cracow than among us, in the provinces. Meeting with high school students in the afternoon must have been utter drudgery, a way to pick up the modest fee provided by the district superintendent. But Herbert's visit changed my view of literature. Not right away, but slowly and steadily. I began to follow his work attentively, and I noticed that, unlike some revered modern writers, Herbert had no *parti pris*, no prior and axiomatic theory of the world. Instead of such dogma, I found in Herbert's work an unforced, flexible search for meaning; flexible, like a person in an Italian town at dawn. He invented the poetic hero whom he called "Mr. Cogito." His poetry was marked by the war, by the occupation, by the dingy totalitarianism of the kingdom of communism, but it still retained a certain humanist buoyancy, a genuine serenity.

Herbert died in July, at the age of 73. He was important to the quest for a high style that is true to our reality, because he was a poet who never settled into a single stylistic costume. He opposed what he called "whimpering." (This, the poet of a country that in modern history has known mainly defeats.) As he wrote in "Why the Classics":

if art for its subject
will have a broken jar
a small broken soul
with a great self-pity
what will remain after us
will be like lovers' weeping
in a small dirty hotel
when wall-paper dawns

(translated by Czeslaw Milosz
and Peter Dale Scott)

"The Envoy of Mr. Cogito" remains Herbert's great hymn. It is a poem in which skepticism joins hands with the sublime, in which "the clown's face" speaks great words:

Go where those others went to the dark
boundary
for the golden fleece of nothingness your
last prize

go upright among those who are on their
knees
among those with their backs turned and
those toppled in the dust

you were saved not in order to live
you have little time you must give testimony

be courageous when the mind deceives you
be courageous
in the final account only this is important

and let your helpless Anger be like the sea
whenever you hear the voice of the insulted
and beaten

let your sister Scorn not leave you
for the informers executioners cowards—
they will win
they will go to your funeral and with relief
will throw a lump of earth

the woodborer will write your smoothed-
over biography

and do not forgive truly it is not in your
power
to forgive in the name of those betrayed
at dawn

beware however of unnecessary pride
keep looking at your clown's face in the
mirror
repeat: I was called—weren't there better
ones than I

beware of dryness of heart love the
morning spring
the bird with an unknown name the
winter oak

light on a wall the splendor of the sky
they don't need your warm breath
they are there to say: no one will console
you

be vigilant—when the light on the
mountain gives the sign—arise and go
as long as blood turns in the breast your
dark star

repeat old incantations of humanity fables
and legends
because this is how you will attain the good
you will not attain
repeat great words repeat them stubbornly
like those crossing the desert who perished
in the sand

and they will reward you with what they
have at
hand with the whip of laughter with
murder on a garbage heap

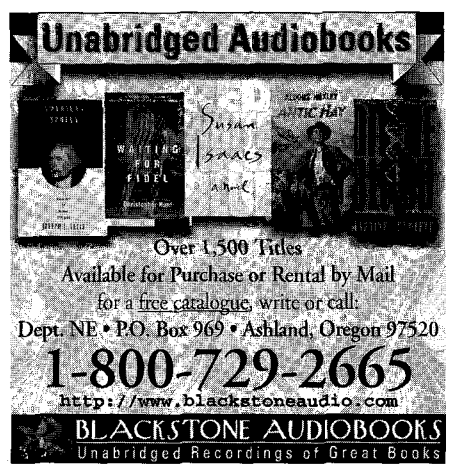
go because only in this way will you be
admitted to the company of cold skulls
to the company of your ancestors:
Gilgamesh Hector Roland
the defenders of the kingdom without limit
and the city of ashes

Be faithful Go

(translated by Bogdana
and John Carpenter)

We are so prosaic, so moderate, so ordinary. Do we even deserve poetry? But we, too, will be legends for future generations, because we will have lived, and our words will mean more than we care to admit today. •

—translated from the Polish
by Clare Cavanagh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"Mr. Civil Rights"

By Randall Kennedy

Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary by Juan Williams

(Times Books, 459 pp., $27.50)

Thurgood Marshall secured an important place in American history on the basis of two accomplishments. As a lawyer with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, he directed an extraordinarily effective campaign of legal reform through litigation. In the 1930s and 1940s, Marshall demanded that segregationist jurisdictions live up to their promise to provide racially separate but equal public facilities. He persuaded courts to decree that black teachers be paid the same as similarly situated white teachers. He also persuaded courts to order state officials to build graduate schools and professional schools for black students if such schools existed for white ones. Several jurisdictions tried to make do with merely providing black students with money for tuition for out-of-state schools that would admit Negroes, asserting that there existed too few black students within the state to warrant the building of facilities solely for them. For fervent segregationists, the prospect of admitting black students to segregated "white" schools was unimaginable. Yet Marshall prodded judges into ordering precisely that course of action, if states declined to provide separate but equal black facilities.

After having extracted as much equality as possible from the separate-but-equal regime, Marshall proceeded to attack the legitimacy of segregation itself. He argued that statutes mandating racial separation constituted a species of caste legislation that deprived blacks of the equal protection of the laws. In Marshall's view, segregation always stigmatized black people, branding the facilities set aside for them as inescapably inferior in the eyes of society. "Separate but equal is a legal fiction," he wrote in one of the briefs that he crafted with others to attack segregation. "There never was and never will be any separate equality."

Looking back, it seems obvious that segregation constituted an obnoxious, invidious, and wholly unjustified racial discrimination. During much of Marshall's career, however, a great many white people—including jurists such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Louis D. Brandeis, Hugo Black, and Felix Frankfurter—perceived segregation as a racial distinction that was innocent, or at least constitutionally tolerable. Through a tireless campaign of public education, much of it in the form of litigation, Marshall and a cadre of remarkable colleagues succeeded slowly in unmasking segregation and revealing its underlying ugliness. The most well-known monument to this effort was *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the landmark decision in 1954, in which the Supreme Court invalidated segregation in public schooling.

At the same time that Marshall led the attack in the courtroom against Jim Crow segregation, he also led legal assaults against other bulwarks of white supremacy. He litigated cases in which the Supreme Court eventually prohibited political parties from excluding blacks from party primaries (*Smith* v. *Allwright* in 1944 and *Rice* v. *Elmore* in 1948), and prohibited judges from enforcing racially restrictive private covenants (*Shelley* v. *Kraemer* and *Hurd* v. *Hodge* in 1948), and prohibited trains from segregating passengers engaged in interstate transportation (*Morgan* v. *Virginia* in 1946), and prohibited authorities from convicting black defendants before juries from which blacks had been racially excluded (*Patton* v. *Mississippi* in 1947).

In addition to serving as an appellate advocate, Marshall served as a trial attorney, representing defendants in places where the very appearance of a colored lawyer was taken by many whites as a dangerous affront to racial custom. Marshall's work demanded not only intellectual acuity but also physical courage. In November 1946, for example, he represented two black men in Columbia, Tennessee who were charged with attempted murder, though it seems that the men had attempted to defend themselves during the course of a race riot in which local police and state troopers essentially assisted violent mobs. While one of Marshall's clients was convicted, the other was acquitted. Following the trial, police officers stopped the car in which Marshall was riding, pushed him into the backseat of an unmarked police vehicle, and then turned off of a highway onto a dirt road near a river where, according to Marshall, a gang of men were waiting for him.

Fortunately, the lawyers with whom Marshall had been driving followed the police car. When it stopped, they refused to leave the area even though the police ordered them to do so. After a tense standoff, the police drove Marshall back to Columbia, where they took him to a judge and charged him with drunkenness. According to Marshall, the judge asked him whether he would be willing to undergo the judge's personal test for inebriation. This test consisted of a suspect breathing into the judge's face, since the judge believed himself capable of detecting even small quantities of liquor. Marshall breathed. The judge smelled. The judge let Marshall go.

Such episodes (and his embellishments upon them), his winning personality, his countless speeches across the country, his burning desire for recognition, and the support of powerful white allies made Marshall a hero and a celebrity. But the basis for his reputation was finally his extraordinary record of victories in the courtroom. Before Martin Luther King, Jr. burst onto the national scene in 1955, Thurgood Marshall was commonly referred to as "Mr. Civil Rights," and was probably the country's most prominent champion of Negro advancement.

Marshall's second great achievement was the body of opinions that he produced as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court between 1967 and 1991. Prior to his appointment to the Court by President Lyndon B. Johnson, Marshall served a brief stint as a judge on the United States Court of Appeals and as the country's first black Solicitor General. Many observers assumed that Johnson would nominate Marshall for the Court if a vacancy arose. But other names did emerge from time to time as alternatives. Robert Dallek, Johnson's biographer, recounts that, two days before the President announced Marshall's nomination, he told an assistant that he was thinking of appointing a black to the Court and asked that assistant to recommend a name. The assistant suggested A. Leon Higginbotham, whom Johnson had appointed to a seat on a federal district court in Philadelphia. This assistant recalls that when he offered Higginbotham's name, Johnson leaned forward

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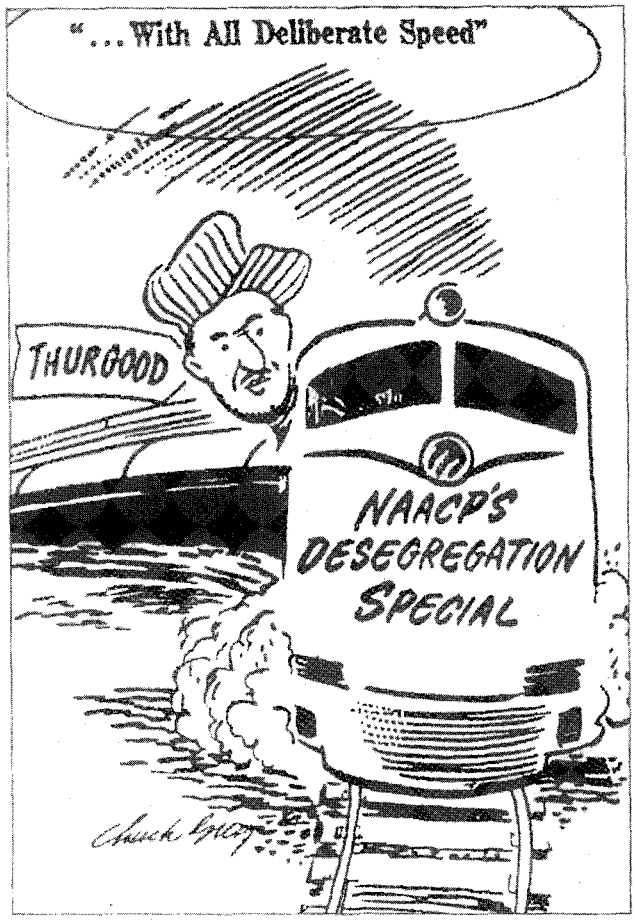
and said that "the only two people who ever heard of Judge Higginbotham are you and his momma. When I appoint a nigger to the bench, I want everyone to know he's a nigger."

No member of the Supreme Court has ever been more keenly alive to social inequalities. For twenty-four years, in a few notable opinions for the Court, and many impassioned dissents, Marshall consistently supported organized labor, racial minorities, the advancement of women, the broadening of rights to freedom of expression, and the narrowing of police authority. With complete assurance, one could rely upon him to vote in favor of upholding abortion rights and affirmative action, and of striking down capital punishment and regulations criminalizing consensual sexual practices among adults.

Explaining why the Court struck down a municipal ordinance that generally barred picketing close to a school, Marshall declared in *Police Department* v. *Mosley* (1972), in language that has become a standard citation for constitutional lawyers, that "above all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, its ideas, its subject matter, or its content. To permit the continued building of our politics and culture, and to assure self-fulfillment for each individual, our people are guaranteed the right to express any thought, free from government censorship." Explaining his support for the racial set-aside for black medical doctors that was invalidated in 1978 by the Court's decision in *Regents of the University of California* v. *Bakke*, Marshall maintained that it "must be remembered that, during most of the past 200 years, the Constitution as interpreted by the Court did not prohibit the most ingenious and pervasive forms of discrimination against the Negro. Now, when a state acts to remedy the effects of that legacy of discrimination, I cannot believe that this same Constitution stands as a barrier." And attacking the Court's decision in *Maher* v. *Roe* (1977) to uphold a state regulation that provided funding for childbirth but not abortion, Marshall charged that a majority of his colleagues had simply pulled "from the air a distinction between laws that absolutely prevent the exercise of the fundamental right to abortion and those that 'merely' make its exercise difficult for some people." "I am appalled," he averred, "at the ethical bankruptcy of those who preach a 'right to life' that means [a] bare existence in utter misery for so many poor women and their children."

Much of the biographical writing done on Thurgood Marshall falls neatly into two categories. There is the hagiography: books and articles that elaborate single-mindedly upon Marshall's virtues. The hagiographers include Michael D. Davis and Hunter R. Clark, in *Thurgood Marshall: Warrior at the Bar, Rebel on the Bench* (1992); Carl Rowan, in *Dream Makers, Dream Breakers: The World of Justice Thurgood Marshall* (1993); and Howard Ball, in his recent *A Defiant Life: Thurgood Marshall and the Persistence of Racism in America*, as well as many of the tributes that have been published in law reviews. But there is also a smaller tradition of commentary that seeks to deflate Marshall's reputation, or at least his reputation as a Justice. For example, in *The Brethren: Inside the Supreme Court* (1979), Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong portrayed Marshall as an amiable but inattentive old man who was overly fond of telling tales about his adventures and watching soap operas in his chambers.



Courtesy Times Books

EDITORIAL PAGE CARTOON, *BALTIMORE AFRO-AMERICAN*. JULY 2, 1955

Juan Williams's biography will provide grist to both celebrants and detractors. For the most part, Williams strikes a praising tone in his own evaluation of his subject. Williams designates Marshall as one of the three leading figures in the struggle for African American liberation in the twentieth century (Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X are the other two), and he contends that Marshall was the one whose activities had the most significant impact on American race relations. He concurs with an editorial published in the *Washington Afro-American* soon after Marshall's death: "We make movies about Malcolm X, we get a holiday to honor Dr. [King], but every day we live with the legacy of Justice Thurgood Marshall."

"It was Marshall," Williams asserts, "who ended legal segregation in the United States. He won Supreme Court victories breaking the color line in housing, transportation, and voting, all of which overturned the 'separate-but-equal' apartheid of American life in the first half of the century." Describing Marshall in reverential terms, in the sort of language in which people nowadays describe Nelson Mandela, Williams maintains that the country's first black Justice "was a revolutionary of grand vision who laid the foundation stone for race relations in his time and for generations beyond."

And yet Williams's portrait of Marshall is also quite damning. Williams reports certain facts, rumors, and comments that the protectors of Marshall's memory will find hurtful and objectionable. His book will certainly nourish our curiosity about the sexual careers of Big Men. According to Williams, Marshall had a woman problem for much of his life. He maintains, for example, that during Marshall's first marriage (which ended in 1955 with the death due to cancer of Vivian Burey), he indulged in "sexual adventures" with other women.

Williams is not the first biographer to touch upon this issue. Davis and Clark also discuss the rumors; but they suggest that Marshall was too dedicated to his work to be distracted by extramarital dalliances. They quote Ersa Poston, a friend of Marshall's, to settle the matter: Marshall "was a very handsome man, and women flocked around him. Women always wanted to get to know the leader and say they slept with him, but Marshall

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My Private Tasmania

has never been discovered,
is thought to be the source of all fire,
is a pigpen for the soul,
changes its shape and location
when you try to think of it.
It smells like a funeral parlor
full of orchids and makes you
want to run for your life.
And at the same time it's sexual,
salacious, creating a terrible hunger.
My Tasmania conceals beneath her
raven-black apron hundreds of
unknown species of wild pigs.
It rocks in the wind at night
and hums a beautiful melody.
Even the birds can't sleep
and begin to sing extinct songs.
Snakes are counting their worry beads.
I'm walking in circles,
getting closer and closer.
Walls of the coalmine
that is my head
begin to cave-in, crashing
in huge chunks to the floor,
shocking the bats out of their dreams
and the rats out of gnawing
on one another. Closer, I said,
I must be getting closer.
The smell of rotting flesh
was gagging me. I couldn't see
through the smoke and haze.
I stop circling, begin to laugh.
My mother says, "Jimmy, please
stop laughing, you're frightening us."

JAMES TATE

passed all that by." But Williams quotes friends and acquaintances who tell a different story.

Herbert Hill served as an official with the NAACP for decades, and according to Hill (as quoted by Williams), "Thurgood loved to pat women's asses, drink, and be hearty company.... His zest for how he lived—drinking, fucking, arguing—made him a near legendary figure." Williams also cites William T. Coleman (the first black Supreme Court clerk and later Secretary of Transportation in the Ford Administration) as someone who substantiates the claim that the married Marshall continued to be "a well-regarded Romeo." Williams quotes Coleman as saying, "I don't think Thurgood would sleep with everybody, but there were some very attractive women who also had status... [whom] Thurgood was very close to."

And there is more biographical tawdriness. Williams claims that Marshall's second wife was pregnant with his first son before their marriage, and that the pregnancy was what accounted for the timing of the marriage so relatively soon after the first Mrs. Marshall's death. Williams also asserts that after Marshall's second marriage, and even after he had been appointed a judge, Solicitor General, and Associate Justice, Marshall continued to engage in a form of sexual misconduct, facilitated sometimes by excessive drinking, that would now be deemed wholly intolerable. Williams quotes Louis Claiborne, a veteran member of the elite staff of the Solicitor General's office, as saying that while he did not know to what extent Marshall indulged in what is nowadays called sexual harassment, Marshall "did have a tendency to let his hands stray." Similar testimony is offered by Monroe Dowling, a person whom Williams describes repeatedly as Marshall's "longtime friend": "See, he would get drunk and get out of the house and get out on the street. And in his drunkenness, he would accost women, any woman. He had no choice about that women business.... With whiskey he could not discriminate."

Some readers may fault Williams for all this, on the grounds that public figures are entitled to a zone of privacy. This is not my view. A biography should reveal everything that is significant about its subject, even if this entails discussing messy, ugly rumors. Williams deserves to be supported for his curiosity, and for his willingness to offend the code of silence aimed at protecting the reputation of a black hero, and for his resourcefulness in obtaining vivid statements from sources from whom one would have expected cautious diffidence.

And yet Williams's treatment of Marshall's personal life is troubling, on a number of grounds. He never explains why he believes that the sexual and marital aspects of Thurgood Marshall's life are significant. Surely such a justification needs to be given for disclosures that will wound Marshall's widow and children and friends. Williams never explains the import of this salacious information for his own estimation of Marshall. Indeed, it seems to have mattered little, for all that Williams says directly is that Marshall's "personal flaws ... never created a scandal." The comment suggests that, in Williams's eyes, mere appearance (did you or did you not get caught?) is the proper standard by which a public figure's private conduct ought to be measured. Perhaps I misread Williams on this delicate matter. If I do, it is because he offers so little guidance.

Williams is insufficiently careful in his handling of witnesses. Monroe Dowling is the individual in Williams's book who says the most unflattering things about Marshall. This "longtime friend" supplies the story mentioned above about Marshall's alleged accosting of women in Washington, D.C. after he had become a Justice. Williams also reports a story told by Dowling in which Marshall supposedly tried to interest him in "playing with" three white prostitutes at a party in the Waldorf Towers, where Marshall and Dowling were "the only two black faces in the room." Williams does not expressly guarantee that this event occurred, but he retails Dowling's anecdote without a hint of qualification. By repeatedly quoting Dowling, and by emphasizing his close association with Marshall, Williams implicitly vouches for Dowling's credibility; but he never satisfactorily indicates why Dowling's observations ought to be believed.

Williams refers in an endnote to a high-school classmate of Marshall's named Essie Hughes, to substantiate the claim that Dowling and his wife socialized often and intensely with Marshall and his first wife in the 1930s. Even if one credits Hughes, however, there remains the need to substantiate the reality of the Dowling-Marshall relationship later. And even if Dowling and Marshall were old buddies, there remains the rudimentary historiographical task of determining the credibility of this old buddy's memory. I would feel more confident in the accuracy of Dowling's reminiscences, especially the most damning ones, if they were corroborated by at least one other person. None of Marshall's previous biographers mentions Dowling. Has Williams uncovered an important new source? Maybe. But he may also have loosed upon his readers, and upon Marshall's reputation, an unreliable, loose-tongued person who seems suspiciously willing to say things for the record that reflect very poorly on his "old buddy."

Williams's irresponsibility may be illustrated also by his depiction of Marshall

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as a lecherous Solicitor General. "There were stories," Williams writes, "about the boss being free with his hands around women at dinners and social parties." There were stories! Were they true? Or were they gossip of the sort that often trails people who generate envy? As noted above, Williams quotes Louis Claiborne to the effect that Marshall had "a tendency to let his hands stray." But Claiborne never says that he himself saw Marshall put his hands on anyone. Nor does Williams mention any woman reporting such conduct. In such a thin evidentiary context, it is surely improper for Williams to leave readers with the clear impression that we know, as a matter of fact, that the Solicitor General was a groper. All that exists, so far, are rumors. The existence of rumors is significant; but rumors can be checked. A rumor marks the beginning of a biographer's work, not the end.

There are other ways in which Williams's biography is likely to contribute to a sharp deflation of Marshall's reputation. Williams refers to observers of high standing who speak rather disparagingly of Marshall's abilities. He quotes Archibald Cox telling a reporter in 1976 that "Marshall may not be very bright or hard-working [as a Justice] but he deserves credit for picking the best law clerks in town." Williams seems to have accepted this view, for he declines to rebut it, and he displays little sustained interest in Marshall's thinking, or in his craft as a lawyer and a judge. You will search his book in vain for quotations from Marshall's briefs, speeches, or opinions that give voice to the libertarian and egalitarian ideals for which Marshall battled. Williams prefers sound bites from interviews with Marshall, which almost invariably make the Justice seem parochial, ignorant, inarticulate, vulgar.

Thurgood Marshall spent twenty-four years on the Supreme Court. He and his law clerks produced scores of important opinions. Williams pays relatively little attention to that work. In a book that is about 400 pages long, only about 70 pages are devoted to Marshall's career as a Justice, and those pages are painfully thin. For example, Marshall passionately articulated the idea that the death penalty in all instances violates the Eighth Amendment's ban on "cruel and unusual punishments," but Williams's biography does not even describe, much less analyze, the substance of this argument. Marshall also argued that the Court interpreted the Equal Protection Clause of the federal constitution in an excessively rigid manner that wrongly insulated from judicial intervention

You deserve a factual look at...

Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank")
Can Israel survive without it?

There is incessant agitation for Israel to turn over most or perhaps even all of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to the PLO. Such a move would inevitably lead to the creation of a Palestinian State—perhaps even with Jerusalem as its capital. Can Israel survive this dismemberment? Is it in the best interests of the United States?

What are the facts?

The Root of the conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan." It calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab state possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

"Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control of the 'West Bank'."

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness, the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time," neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank."

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dramatic social and economic inequalities that were buttressed by state laws. He articulated this belief in 1973, in a dissent to a Supreme Court decision entitled *San Antonio Independent School District* v. *Rodriguez*. In addition to advancing an idea of far-reaching theoretical import, Marshall's view, had it been accepted, would have ended the widespread practice by which public school systems are financed through local property taxes, with the predictable consequence that richer districts get better schools than poorer districts. But *San Antonio* is barely mentioned in Williams's book.

Marshall displayed his sympathy for the underdog most poignantly in a dissent in *United States* v. *Kras* in 1973, in which he argued that poor people should be excused from having to pay a fee beyond their means in order to file for bankruptcy. In his opinion for the Court, Justice Harry Blackmun made light of the petitioner's assertion that he could not afford to pay the filing fee, stating that saving up to pay the fee in weekly installments would have cost "less than the price of a movie and little more than the cost of a pack or two of cigarettes." Marshall dissented furiously. While it was "perfectly proper for judges to disagree about what the Constitution requires," he wrote, it "was disgraceful for an interpretation of the Constitution to be premised upon unfounded assumptions about how people live." According to Marshall, the Court simply did not realize how close Kras and others like him lived "to the margin of survival." "The desperately poor," Marshall asserted, "almost never go to see a movie, which the [Court] seems to believe is almost a weekly activity." *United States* v. *Kras* is not mentioned by Williams.

Williams seems to doubt that Marshall's opinions constituted work that was integral to the Justice's conception of himself and his governmental role. But he gives no reason or justification for consigning to the margins the work that makes a Justice, any Justice, notable.

The biographical work that most comprehensively and thoughtfully delineates the public aspects of Justice Marshall's long career is Mark Tushnet's volumes, *Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936-1961* and *Making Constitutional Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1961-1991*. Those interested in learning about the legal doctrines with which Marshall grappled, the litigation strategies that he devised, and the judicial consequences of all these efforts, should consult Tushnet's impressive, if dry, monographs.

It is true, as Williams and others have noted, that Thurgood Marshall could have appropriately laid claim to a large and honored place in history based on what he accomplished before he was elevated to the Supreme Court. It is also true that Marshall's performance on the Court was disappointing in important respects. He was inattentive to large areas of law outside his most passionate concerns, an inattentiveness that reflected itself in the much-remarked fact that he watched television consistently and intently in his chambers during the workday. Providing minimal guidance or oversight, he routinely delegated to his clerks the task of writing the opinions attributed to him. Moreover, unlike Justice William J. Brennan, his liberal comrade-in-arms, Marshall invested little effort in the personal diplomacy that was sometimes needed to round up votes in close cases. In the end, though, Marshall voted the right way and said the right things with respect to the issues that matter most to the proper functioning of American democracy.

Williams is stronger in describing Marshall's career as a crusading lawyer. He vividly details, as no one has before, Marshall's first defense, in 1934 in Prince Georges County, Maryland, of a man facing the possibility of capital punishment—an unlucky thug who was executed though a defendant more culpable than him went free. Williams also notes and underlines certain facts about Marshall that others have known but declined to publicize. It is a striking fact, for example, that Marshall personally arranged for a white attorney, Jack Greenberg, to succeed him as the head of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, an action that, according to Williams, was calculated in part to snub young black attorneys, most notably Robert L. Carter, whom he perceived as having been disloyal and overly ambitious.

Again, Williams could have improved his book by checking a bit more rigorously every aspect of the folklore that constitutes so much of the public memory of Thurgood Marshall. Marshall himself contributed to this folklore. He was not one to let facts get in the way of a good story. Like many successful people, he was egocentric, though he camouflaged his hubris with a self-deprecating informality. An example of Marshall's inflated sense of self-importance was his preposterous assertion, frequently voiced, that the real reason for the dramatic downfall of Lyndon Johnson was not the Vietnam War but rather his own elevation to the Supreme Court.

In the light of Marshall's freedom with autobiographical "facts" as well as the inevitable lapses in memory, Williams should have been more punctilious about substantiating stories related to him verbally by Marshall and others. Seeking to underscore the physical dangers that Marshall faced, and hence his bravery in confronting those dangers, Williams writes that in 1956, on a visit to Montgomery, "an attempt was made on Marshall's life." But Williams cites nothing that firmly supports this claim. It may be true that a man tried to throw a bomb into a home where Marshall was meeting with other civil rights activists, but Williams offers no evidence suggesting that Marshall was the specific target. It may well have been that the target of the bomber's wrath was not Marshall, but the owner of the home, the stalwart black civil rights attorney Arthur Shores, a man whose house was bombed several times during that turbulent era.

Seeking similarly to underscore his hero's willingness to brave criticism from blacks, Williams reports that in the late 1950s Marshall gave brief political talks between acts at the Apollo Theater to young blacks who objected to the lawyer's "optimistic, flag-waving, up-by-the-bootstraps rhetoric." According to Williams, "several times the crowd booed, and threatened [Marshall] by throwing bottles." Williams offers no references to support this description. It seems as though he might be relying upon an interview with Marshall. I find it hard to believe that people at the Apollo in the late '50s would have thrown bottles at Thurgood Marshall, even if he disagreed with, or bored them.

A page later, seeking to underscore the conflict between Marshall and Malcolm X, Williams describes a scene in which two Black Muslims accost Marshall and say menacingly: "You half-white son of a bitch. We ought to kick your ass." Williams offers no documentation by which his anecdote can be checked. Again, he seems to be depending on the recollection of Marshall himself. Again, I don't believe it. There is no corroborating evidence, and the Black Muslims in those years were known for their restraint and their eschewal of vulgar language. Williams's colorful tale doesn't sound right.

It is a measure of the significance of Thurgood Marshall—the man, the jurist, the icon—that, for all the research and all the commentary that has already been devoted to him, more is still warranted. We still do not know enough about Marshall's relationship to the black bar; about the technical strengths and weaknesses of his performance as an attorney; about the relative importance of his chosen means for reform (litiga-

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tion) in comparison to other transformative activities and events; or about his achievements as a Justice in comparison with his peers.

Nor do we know enough about the factors that prompted Marshall to adopt a more liberal public stance on certain issues (such as affirmative action) than the stance he adopted privately. In recent months, critics of the Supreme Court have been complaining about the dearth of black law clerks. It has been reported that fewer than 2 percent of the law clerks selected by the Justices between 1972 and 1998 were black. Four sitting justices—Rehnquist, Scalia, Kennedy, and Souter—have hired no black law clerks. Over the course of eight years, Clarence Thomas has hired only one. Yet, as Williams notes, during Marshall's first decade on the Court, he hired only one black law clerk—his godchild, Karen Hastie Williams. Later he hired more blacks than any other Justice, but still he hired few. In 1983, of his four law clerks, only one was black. (It was me.) In the previous year, he had had no black law clerks; and the subsequent year he again hired no black law clerks. Moreover, during his entire career as a Justice, Marshall never hired as a law clerk anyone who had graduated from a predominantly black law school, including his alma mater, the Howard University School of Law. Buried here is a difficult and delicate story that awaits a narrator deeply schooled in the psychological complexities of the black bourgeoisie.

Thurgood Marshall continues to warrant admiration. He had flaws that have been insistently denied by persons who sought, for reasons of friendship and racial pride, to protect his image; and he displayed deficiencies that have been papered over by hagiographers. But in the long view, when the good is considered alongside the bad, Marshall's merits are overwhelming. Coming of age at a time when black professionals were openly mocked, he pursued his ambitions to the hilt and accomplished more—much more—than peers to whom every privilege had been extended. It can justly be said, given what we currently know, that he was one of the greatest lawyers in the history of the United States.

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Hairdressers and Democracy

BY ISAAC KRAMNICK

Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders by Don Herzog

(Princeton University Press, 559 pp., $29.95)

In 1802, Samuel Taylor Coleridge endured what he described in a letter to his wife as a singularly unpleasant ride on a mail coach to London. A fellow passenger's "foul stench ... crucified my nose the whole way." He never tired of telling the story. Twenty-eight years later, his "Table Talk" finds him regaling his dinner companions with a vivid description of the incident, which also explains the unusual verb in his original note to his wife.

> I once sat in a coach opposite a Jew—a symbol of Clothes Bags—an Isaiah of Hollywell Street—he would close the window—I opened it—he closed it again—Upon which I looked gravely at him and said—"Son of Abraham! thou smellest! Son of Isaac! thou are offensive! Son of Jacob! thou stinkest damnably! See the man in the Moon! He is holding his nose at thee at that distance: Dost thou think that I sitting here can endure it any longer?" The Jew was astounded—opened the window himself, and said "he was sorry he did not know before I was so great a shentleman!"

The unbearable coach ride is revisited by Don Herzog in his remarkable book. Coleridge's revulsion at Jews, who "are the lowest of mankind," captures for Herzog the utterly contemptuous attitudes of English poets and politicians toward women, workers, blacks, and Jews in the years following the French Revolution. It is a sorry tale that Herzog tells. His book is punctuated with the venomous, sometimes "nauseating" (Herzog's word) prose employed by the likes of Coleridge, Southey, Byron, and Cobbett to depict what for them were the loathsome and disgusting vermin clustered at the bottom of the hierarchical chain of being.

The principal subject of Herzog's book is Edmund Burke. His words and his ideals form the core of Herzog's exploration of English social conservatism. What a treat it is to meet Burke on his own terms and in his own time, instead of the transhistorical and idealized Burke that the right has retailed for the last fifty years, a heroic seer whose timeless wisdom can single-handedly save Western civilization from its godless gravediggers.

To be sure, the mythification of Burke began long ago. Coleridge himself, after abandoning the radicalism of his youth, could not conceive "of a time or state of things in which the writings of Burke will not have the highest value." In Burke's writings, Coleridge wrote, were "the germs of almost all political truths." Wordsworth, equally keen to repudiate his own youthful political indiscretion, immortalized Burkean conservatism in *The Prelude*:

> I see him,—old, but vigorous in age,—
> Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start
> Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe
> The younger brethren of the grove.
> But some—
> While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,
> Against all systems built on abstract rights,
> Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims
> Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time;
> Declares the vital power of social ties
> Endeared by custom; and with high disdain,
> Exploding against Theory, insists
> Upon the allegiance to which men are born.

From poet Wordsworth to President Wilson: surprisingly enough, the champion of American progressivism also adored Burke. For the Anglophilic former professor of government and permanent conservative Presbyterian, Burke was both the model House of Commons man and the fountain of truth. In an essay in 1896, Wilson described Burke as the embodiment of racial wisdom, the instinctive common sense and practical soul of the Anglo-Saxon. An interaction with Burke was emotionally and physically stimulating. To read him was to hasten the pulse, quicken the breath. "Does not your blood stir at these passages?" Wilson asked his readers. Wilson was struck by Burke's "concrete mind." His disdain for "abstract speculation" and for "system" appealed to him, as did Burke's "practical" approach, and his preference for "expediency." Wilson also applauded Burke's crusade against Jacobinism. "The things he hated are truly hateful," Wilson wrote of Burke. "He hated the French Revolutionary philosophy and deemed it unfit for free men, and that philosophy is in fact radically evil and corrupting."

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But the apotheosis of Burke and Burkeanism came during the Cold War, when nothing less than the defense of Christian civilization was the mission that American conservatives assigned to him. "The rise of the doctrines of Karl Marx and Communism" is comparable in scale only "to the ascending movement of the doctrines of Rousseau and the kind of democracy that was called Jacobinism," wrote Ross Hoffman and Paul Levack in 1959; and as Burke saved Christendom then, so his words could do it now. "He had become relevant again," they insisted.

For Russell Kirk, writing in 1967, the impact of the *Communist Manifesto* was to efface "in much of the world ... that order governed by what Burke described as the spirit of religion and the spirit of a gentleman." Burke, in Kirk's account, was our mentor in puncturing "the overweening self-confidence of modern man." His wisdom and his example are a mighty bulwark "against the fanatic ideologue and the armed doctrine, the great plagues of our time." Since we are attacked by the same enemy, fanaticism, "the resonance of Burke's voice still is heard amidst the howl of our winds of abstract doctrine." Burke was precisely the inspiration that America needed in the Cold War:

> Burke's ideas did more than establish islands in the sea of radical thought; they provided the defenses of conservatism, on a grand scale, that still stand and are not liable to fall in our time.... Our age ... seems to be groping for certain of the ideas which Burke's inspiration formed into a system of social preservation.

In 1973, in the pages of *The New Republic*, Burke was offered also as the avatar of liberalism. Alexander Bickel concluded that:

> Our problem, as much as Burke's, is that we cannot govern, and should not, in submission to the dictates of abstract theories, and that we cannot live, much less govern, without some "uniform rule and scheme of life," without principles, however provisionally and skeptically held. Burke's conservatism, if that is what it was, which at any rate belongs to the liberal tradition properly understood and translated to our time, is the way.

But Herzog gives us none of this. His Burke is a post-Cold War Burke, rooted in Burke's own intellectual and historical context. Far from his mythic persona as the champion of democratic liberal values against the totalitarian menace, Burke is here made (with much support from Burke's own writings) into the intellectual battering ram for the assault on democracy and liberalism that swept through Britain after the French Revolution. Herzog's Burke is frightened by the rumblings of the uppity "swinish multitude," those in "the lower orders" struggling to move from "subjects" to "citizens." He proudly and bravely defends the hierarchical social order of Europe's besieged but still glorious "Age of Chivalry," where

> You would have had a protected, satisfied, laborious and obedient people, taught to seek and to recognize the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; in which consists the true moral equality of mankind, and not in that monstrous fiction, which by inspiring false ideas and vain expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walk of laborious life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that real inequality which it never can remove; and which the order of civil life establishes as much for the benefit of those whom it must leave in an humble state, as those whom it is able to exalt to a condition more splendid but not more happy.

The Enlightenment, and the inexorable leveling tendency of a politics that prizes reason and rational discussion, is what Burke and social conservatives such as Coleridge railed against. In the egalitarian Enlightenment ideal of the "republic of letters," the emergence of which Herzog explores in interesting detail, no one is sovereign. Democratic debate flourishes, blind to social status. Revisiting and nicely complicating Habermas's seminal exploration of "the structural transformation of the public sphere," Herzog takes the reader on a colorful tour of London coffee houses, provincial debating societies, and lending libraries in the eighteenth century. The rise of mass-circulation newspapers, with their nearly verbatim accounts of Parliamentary debates, along with the spread of literacy and popular education, seem to have contributed as much as the French Revolution to the widespread conviction found in Burke and his circle that social hierarchy was threatened by new democratic conceptions.

If the lower orders were to be educated, and their minds "poisoned," as Tory pamphleteers worried, then age-old assumptions of deference and submission at the heart of the traditional order would be threatened. Nightmarish visions of the disaffected lower orders, of a world turned upside down, haunted the elite. For Lord Kames, "knowledge is a dangerous acquisition to the labouring poor: the more of it that is possessed by a shepherd, a ploughman, or any drudge, the less satisfaction he will have in labour." The periodical *John Bull* warned in 1825 that "we overeducate the poor and what do they say?—that they are superior to the drudgery of cotton-spinning, or digging, or doing menial offices." In 1826, the folly of enlightening the rabble was ridiculed by A Country Gentleman: "we are to have our pots and pans mended, our clothes made, our fields ploughed, and our streets macadamized—by philosophers!"

This inversion is the heart of the matter. Herzog captures perfectly this crucial moment, when time-honored notions of the naturalness of social hierarchy were being undermined. A real paradigm shift was at work. The depiction of society in vertical terms, in ranks of superiors and inferiors, as taught by *The Republic* and countless iterations of the "Great Chain of Being," was being fundamentally challenged by egalitarian ideals. As Herzog notes, great issues were at stake. Who has "public standing and epistemic authority: who counts as a participant in public dialogue? Or, more generally, whom ought we to listen to—and believe—and why?" For Burke's ally Sir Brooke Boothby, the matter was clear. There was no reason to take Paine's *Rights of Man* seriously, since it was "written with the logic of shoemakers and the metaphysics of barbers."

As Burkean conservatives watched deferential subjects strive to rise out of their lowliness and attain social dignity and conduct themselves as skeptical and argumentative citizens, they fought back. They insisted that the "swinish multitude" had no place participating in public life and deserved no respectful hearing. With meticulous and wide-ranging scholarship, Herzog recreates the contempt that the great and good felt for the lower orders. He seems to have read every letter, pamphlet, novel, essay, play, and sermon produced in England in the years after the French Revolution, and he draws a portrait of despised women, workers, Jews, and blacks that must now be required reading for anyone who studies Britain from the 1790s to the 1830s.

Especially required reading is Herzog's wonderful chapter on hairdressers, which is a *tour de force*. It turns out that Boothby's dismissal of Paine as a lowly barber was the put-down (or keep-down) of choice in the campaigns of contempt. The subversion of the traditional hierarchical social order is repeatedly characterized and ridiculed in terms of ambitious hairdressers, who, not knowing their place, reach high above their natural stations in life. Even for Burke, hairdressers come to exemplify the unnaturalness of equality. In conjuring up the horror that was the French Revolution, he invokes the cast of wretched

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characters it introduced to citizenship, to a deliberative role in the highest powers of the state: "Jew brokers ... shameless women of the lowest condition, keepers of hotels, taverns and brothels, pert apprentices, clerks, shop boys, hairdressers." The uppity hairdresser epitomized the world turned upside down: his place was to prepare and to powder his betters for their public roles, not to play such a salient part himself.

Herzog provides us with much more than unforgettably venomous portrayals of grasping rabbis and grinning black women. He confronts issues that are troublesome to democratic theory to this day. How is a rational, deliberative politics possible, he asks, when some are convinced that others are unreflective, uninformed, tempestuous, and disgusting? Are we any more wedded than Burke or Coleridge to the democratic maxim that one heeds the merit of the arguments and not the status of the arguers?

Herzog is a relative rarity among scholarly writers today, in that he self-consciously deflates the pretensions of the academic voice. Remarkably consistent with the theme that he explores in his book, he opens up learned discourse to a kind of democratic argumentation. Some will find his tone too casual and too informal, but it is a principled political voice, seeking to make scholarly writing more closely approximate the ordinary usage of words outside the academy. Thus we read of the privileged "bamboozling the yokels" and of tracts that amount to "no big deal." Lord Gordon was "zany," Godwin's *Political Justice* is a "pudgy handbook of philosophical anarchism," and Priestley was the author of "smarmy pamphlets." Tom Paine had a "snotty adolescence" and wrote "spunky stuff." We find "goofy premises" and "goofy outfits," as well as "loopy novels." Scholarly arguments are advanced by means of colloquial discussions about toilet training and "turds," of negotiations between friends over a red bicycle, of what counts as jazz after the arrival of bebop.

While his quirky and curmudgeonly prose may occasionally leap too obtrusively from the page, one suspects that this voice is itself a part of Herzog's argument. It telegraphs his rejection of the new scholasticism in much of contemporary social theory, where arcane and virtually private languages make most texts inaccessible to all but the professionalized and the initiated. Democratic deliberation and argumentation certainly cannot occur in the academy if the terms of discourse are set by a priesthood and a jargon. This, after all, is what Herzog's book is about: the struggle against the constrictions and the exclusions of elitism.

Many of the new scholastics are also self-proclaimed leftists, of course; and this points us to a serious problem in this otherwise splendid book. It is that the political world is seldom as neatly bifurcated as Herzog portrays it. The book's thesis is animated by the dialectical opposition of "conservatives" and "democrats," of "elites" and "lower orders," of "the privileged" and "the workers." But the social order in early nineteenth century Britain was much more complicated. Radical egalitarian ideals were just as likely to come from the commercial and professional middle classes as from Herzog's "workers" or the marginalized "lower orders." Meritocratic advocates of careers open to the talented would subvert the age of chivalry just as effectively as "the swinish multitude."

Herzog is not blind to this complexity, and he acknowledges that some middle-class radicals could be as dismissive of the lowly as Burke or Coleridge. He also notes that recent English left-wing historians and critics, such as E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, shamelessly ignored Cobbett's raving anti-Semitism. But can these qualifications be worked into Herzog's analysis without damaging it? If these are the characteristic prejudices of the entire culture of modern England, is Herzog really entitled to portray them as the characteristic prejudices of Burkeanism and conservatism?

Indeed he is. For middle-class radical attitudes to the lowly and Burkean attitudes to the lowly were not the same, especially with respect to the largest group of them, the white male Christians, who made up what contemporaries called "the industrious poor." The radicals spoke disparagingly of the poor, but never in the contemptuous terms of permanent and hopeless wretchedness. Quite the contrary. Most bourgeois reformers, such as the Unitarian chemist Joseph Priestley, were convinced that "the industrious poor" could be easily led to middle-class virtue through cleanliness, frugality, and learning the link between self-denial and eventual pleasure. Herzog sees this middle-class story as another story and a different story, which is fair. The more limited story that he tells so masterfully—the transformation of humble subjects into proud citizens—is grand enough.

ISAAC KRAMNICK is professor of government at Cornell University.

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Misreadings

LONG BEFORE HE ATTAINED CELEbrity as America's most besotted bardolater, cuddling next to a *Newsweek* reporter to watch *Shakespeare in Love*, Harold Bloom rebelled against the genteel, Anglophilic "great tradition"—the notion that literary giants across the generations are like chummy members of an exclusive club. Bloom argued instead that each major poet found his voice only after engaging in a death-struggle against some prior master whose works he had brazenly "misread"—that is, appropriated and subverted to his own ends. Thus, the creative act was a Nietzschean contest of wills, with overtones of Freud. "Strong" poets had the talent and ego to overcome their literary fathers and break through to originality. Weaker poets, mere imitators, fell by the wayside.

NOT MANY POETS HAVE EMBRACED Bloom's theory, but it has, still, a kind of cracked grandeur, at least when elaborated by Bloom in his books *A Map of Misreading* and *The Anxiety of Influence*. And it was a boon for graduate students. Several waves of them (including, briefly, myself) were enraptured by Bloom's tortured monologues and left the seminar room fired up to ransack Keats's odes in search of obscure Wordsworth allusions or to frisk John Ashbery for hidden granules of Wallace Stevens.

BLOOM AND I HAVE BOTH MOVED on, but his notion of willful misreading has been much on my mind since I happened upon a survey published on the Internet a week or two ago by Duke University. Its alumni association had asked notable graduates to name their favorite books. Respondents included Kenneth Starr (Duke Law '73), who chose as his "favorite of 1998" my *Whittaker Chambers: A Biography*.

UNLESS I'M MISREADING, WHICH IS entirely possible (or inevitable, by Bloom's reckoning), the independent counsel, forlorn amid the debris of his calamitous prosecution, has been drawing solace from Chambers, another accuser who had the facts on his side yet was misunderstood (misread) by his countrymen, especially the liberals among them. The parallels are obvious: Like Starr, Chambers presented a bland, almost affectless exterior that couldn't quite conceal his sense of mission. And, like Starr, Chambers was matched against a telegenic liar (Alger Hiss).

THE DIFFERENCE, OF COURSE, IS that Chambers persuaded the jury in his case, while Starr came up dismally short. He misread, I suspect, a crucial distinction between his "precursor" (in Bloom's terminology) and himself. For all his crusading zeal, Chambers was a most reluctant witness, who had risked perjury rather than divulge the true extent of Hiss's criminal activity. Only when Hiss lodged a potentially ruinous slander suit did Chambers, after deep torment, yield up the documents that sent Hiss to jail. Chambers took no pleasure in his triumph. He concluded that "nothing had been gained except the misery of others." At one point he attempted suicide.

IF CHAMBERS'S APPETITE FOR PUBlic crusades was small, Starr's seems insatiable. He's still engaged in the nightmarish hunt he embarked on in 1994, when he first set up shop in Little Rock and sent assorted bit players in Whitewater to jail. The moment of truth came when Lucianne Goldberg and Linda Tripp materialized with their lubricious tapes. What kept Starr from showing those two the door? Only his implacable legal fundamentalism, plus the joy of squeezing the trigger now that Clinton was at last in his sights. Chambers, the onetime Communist, remained a kind of Bolshevik till the end, curiously admiring of his adversary. "I do not hate Mr. Hiss," he said at a climactic moment. "We were close friends, but we are caught in a tragedy of history.... I have testified against him with remorse and pity." When he spoke those words, he was gray-faced, his voice a throb. When Starr assured Diane Sawyer he didn't hate Clinton and in fact found him "wonderfully empathetic," his face was frozen in a bland smile.

NOT LONG AGO, *SALON*, THE ONline magazine, asked me to comment on the Blumenthal-Hitchens snit. Why me? I hadn't a clue, and politely declined. Then I read in *The Washington Post* that Christopher Buckley had likened Blumenthal-Hitchens to Hiss-Chambers—a contest of loyalties, with everyone forced to choose sides. Blumenthal, cast in the role of Hiss, must be delighted. One of his last contributions to *The New Yorker* was a review of my Chambers biography in which Blumenthal earnestly argued that the cold war was a homosexual plot masterminded by Chambers with a boost from Roy Cohn. Soon he turned up in the Clinton administration, in time to devise his now-famous theory of a "vast right-wing conspiracy." At least he's improving. He's progressed from fantasy ("weak" misreading in Bloomian terms) to banal overstatement. Hitchens, cast by Buckley in the Chambers role, has absorbed a public drubbing. I wonder if it will inspire him to revise his earlier misreadings of the Hiss case. Not long ago, Hitchens characterized Chambers as "a paranoid solipsist" who let himself be used "as a launching pad" by right-wing partisans. Precisely what Sid's backers are saying about Hitch. In any case, I think Buckley misread. Sid v. Hitch lacks the gravitas of Hiss-Chambers or even Clinton-Starr. The two combatants are closer to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, small fry fatally trapped in a drama much bigger than themselves.

WHILE AMERICA SEEMS UNITED IN its contempt for Linda Tripp, I am indebted to her. She's helped me understand why, 50 years ago, so many people hated Chambers, who exhibited a Tripp-like weakness for self-dramatization and was similarly inclined toward maudlin public displays. His protests, in his memoir *Witness*, that he suffered for the nation's sins and was the appointed spokesman for its "humble people," rang as false as Tripp's notorious "I'm you."

BUT, HOWEVER RIPE CHAMBERS'S words were, his actions in the great case were above reproach. Here Bloom's old theory is of little use. It was designed to analyze lyric poetry. He hadn't yet discovered character, the centerpiece of his massive study of Shakespeare. Bloom has already said Starr is Polonius. I don't believe he's commented on Chambers. If *Salon* or any other publication comes calling, Bloom could start with *Witness*. Its epigraph is taken from *Hamlet*, Act One, Scene One, wherein Horatio addresses the Ghost: "If thou art privy to thy country's fate/which happily foreknowing may avoid/O speak!" That is the difference between Hiss-Chambers and Clinton-Starr. The first case called for eloquence. The second would have profited from silence.

SAM TANENHAUS

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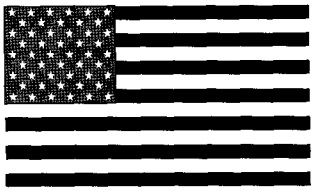

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COCAINE	10.5	2.1	1.9	0.6	0.7	0.2
INHALANTS	5.7	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.4	too small to measure
HEROIN	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.1	too small to measure	too small to measure

Source U.S.: National Household Survey 1997 SAMHSA, Office of applied studies Washington, DC.
Source the Netherlands: M. Abraham, P. Cohen, M. DeWinter: Licit and Illicit drug use in the Netherlands, Center for Drug Research, University of Amsterdam.

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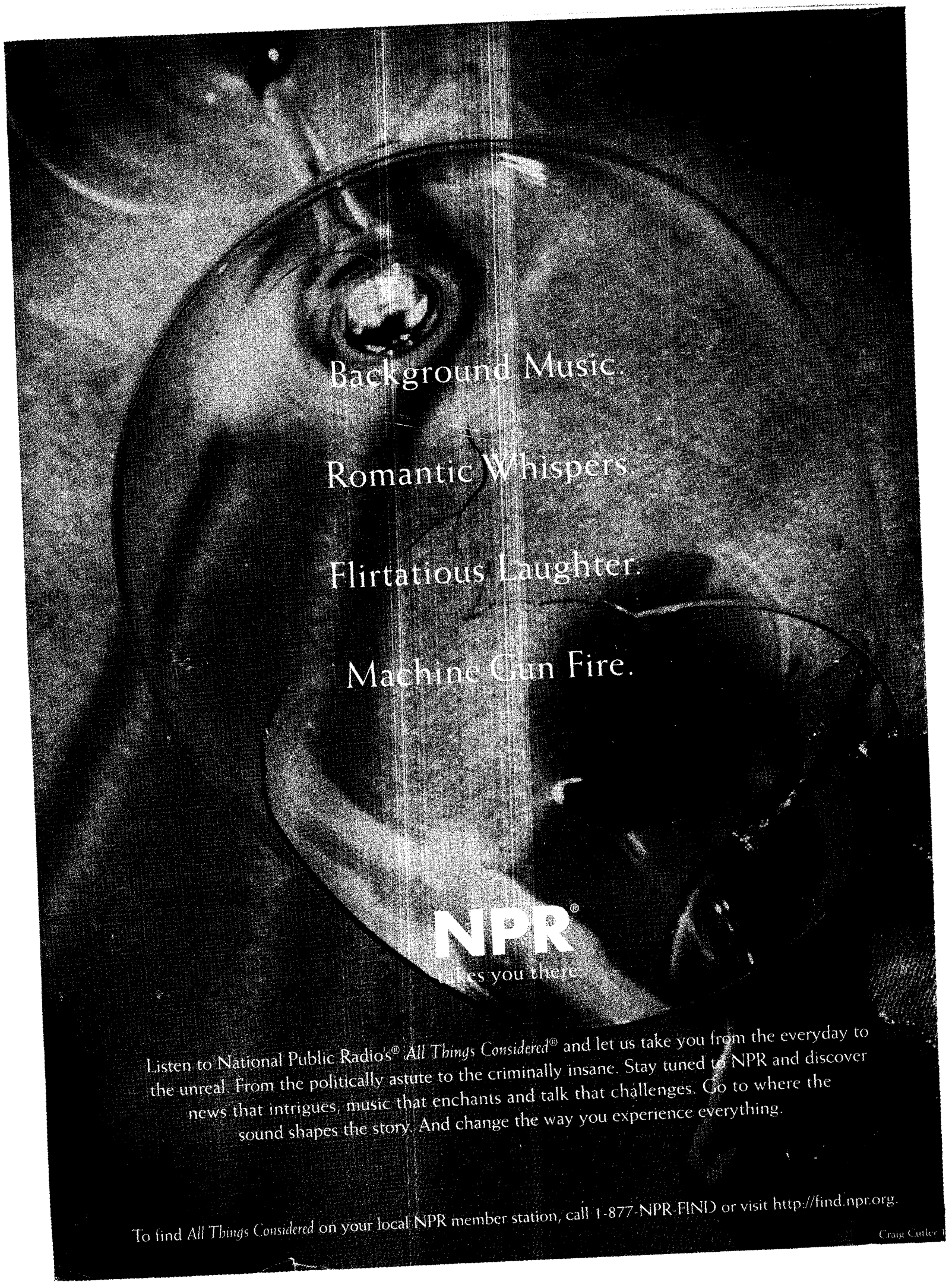
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